

-I always loved going swimming in the lake at our family cabin in northern Minnesota. Infact as a kid, I was known throughout my family as “Eric the fish”. I would love to dive down and examine all of the rocks at the bottom of the lake, turn them over and discover some kind of worm or lakewater crab. One time when I was enthralled as usual on the bottom of the lake with this one rock. I then dove up to the top for some air and then THUD. I smacked my face right into a steel beam of the boat lift. Immediately I felt my front tooth and started to freak out because half of it was gone. I had chipped about $\frac{3}{4}$ of it off and now looked like Count Dracula. My mom, of course, kicked into nurse gear (as she has a nursing background), wiped my face, and called our dentist’s office to see what we should do. She asked constantly if I was in any pain which was comforting in some ways, but I really wasn’t concerned about that. As a 13 year old, my teenage self was crying out: WHAT HAVE I DONE?? AM I EVER GOING TO LOOK THE SAME?? I could tell my mother in her fast paced “get it done” mode where she would ask me questions, but I couldn’t exactly describe my real pain to her. That’s when my Grandma, or “Grandma Bell” as we called her (Bell was my mother’s maiden name), sat down next to me. “You know, she said, a couple years ago I fell off my bike and hit my head. In order to check me out in the hospital, they had to shave some of my hair off and I was horrified. But I just had to tell myself, hey, I’m setting a new trend (she pat her head). Eventually I found it grew back. I bet you can do the same too!” She gave me a big hug after that and I remember I began to cry. I love my mother and even though she was being helpful in making arrangements with the dentist, at that specific point in time it was my grandma who really “saw me”. She got my pain: not a physical pain, but a fear of humiliation and embarrassment. She comforted me in a way I needed.

-The Gospel of John focuses on this concept of “seeing”. “Come and see” as Jesus says. What one sees is importantly connected to what one has faith in. Last week’s story of Nicodemus “coming in the night” to ask Jesus how one can be “born again” and this story of the Samaritan Woman are placed side by side in this gospel (chapters 3 and 4). I don’t think it’s an accident that they are placed side by side in both this gospel text *and* in our Sunday lectionary. Who really sees something and who doesn’t? Who really “gets it”?

-When the woman says, “I see you are a prophet,” that’s an amazing statement. I think she is doing something more than just changing the subject from her five husbands. She is making a confession of faith. What leads her to do this courageous thing? Maybe it’s because Jesus has “seen” her. He has seen her situation: most likely a plight of dependence on another man in a highly patriarchal society (the one whom you are living with is not your husband), not immorality. He has recognized her, spoken with her, offered her something of incomparable worth. He has *seen* her -- she *exists* for him, has worth, value, significance, and all of this is treatment to which she is probably unaccustomed.

-Have you felt “seen” in your life? What has it felt like for you? Have there been people in your life that have consistently “seen” your entire self?

-We think of prophets as those who are courageous and go out into the “thick of things” and proclaim the good news. Yes, this is an aspect of what being a prophet means, but there is much more to being a prophet than that which the story of the Samaritan Woman can hit home for us. A prophet is also one who “sees”. Here is the kicked: Maybe in seeing others, they can in turn encourage others to be prophets. In seeing this woman for who she really is, Jesus empowered her to leave things behind in order to be a prophet herself: “Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, ‘Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?’”

-I and Abby sing in the choir *Dolce Canto* who gave our big spring concert last night. We collaborated with several choirs at CS Porter Middle School who, let me tell you, are incredible kids. We sang a piece jointly together called *Voces Lucis* (“Voices of Light”) which was based on a wonderful poem by Charles Anthony Silvestri. Our director, Peter Park, asked the kids: Who are voices of light? Immediately many of them said “angels” which was really fascinating. To his credit, Peter pushed the question with them a little more and said: “Yeah, they could be angels. But, I bet light is in your life in different ways. Maybe voices of light can be people that you know too.” Turns out the kids ran with this and at our concert last night read out loud folks that have been voices of light for them: parents, teachers, friends, family, mentors. All people that in one way or another, have seen them for who they really are. In other words, prophets. My grandma was a voice of light and prophet to me during that moment of fear following my boat lift collision. That experience has inspired me to be as much as I can a prophet and see others in their fear, anger, sadness, hope, and joy.

Who do you see? Who are you a prophet for? May Christ live in your heart and inspire you to open your eyes, to see others in their entirety, and inspire them to be more of who God created them to be. Amen.