

March 26, 2017

1 SM 16:1B, 6-7, 10-13A

EPH 5:8-14

JN 9:1-41

"I only know that I was blind and now I can see" John 9:25

Several years ago, in a film about the life of Christ, Jesus was depicted as possessing large, penetrating eyes. Today, the focus would probably be different. An informed director of a new film on Christ might instead depict him as eager to touch people—people who have lost hold of a guiding hand, people who are restless and searching, searching for meaning in life, searching for identity, searching for fulfillment, searching for acceptance. And it would be a depiction of our Lord who is not at all reluctant to be touched in return. That would be an accurate depiction of the Christ spirit that touches us at the very center of our being.

Interestingly, developmental psychologists and others have been telling us for decades the importance of physical touch, especially an infant's prolonged physical contact with his or her mother. Staff members of mental hospitals are told that shaking a patient's hand, or touching a shoulder or an arm affectionately can go a long way toward healing.

Jesus was constantly in the midst of crowds reaching out to touch and to heal, to comfort, to reassure, and never failing in that connection. We see him raising back to life a sleeping girl by taking her hand (Mk. 5:41). We see him curing a deaf man by laying his hand on him and putting his moist fingers in the man's ears (Mk. 8:23). We see him stretching out his hand to cure a leper (Mk. 8:23). We see him with little children, reaching out to caress them (Mk. 10:13).

**Reflection questions:**

When you reach out to share the Rite of Peace are you ever reluctant to take your neighbor's hand?

When you see a person in need, do you think of Jesus and what he would do?

*Reflection by Deacon Malcolm (Mal) Lunsford, Saints Peter and Paul, Merrillville.*