

Sight

Wednesday 29th January



*Eye (unknown artist) watercolour on ivory c. 1900
[Smithsonian American Art Museum and its Renwick Gallery]*

Scripture: Mark 4.1-20

Again he began to teach beside the lake. Such a very large crowd gathered around him that he got into a boat on the lake and sat there, while the whole crowd was beside the lake on the land. He began to teach them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: 'Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and it sprang up quickly, since it had no depth of soil. And when the sun rose, it was scorched; and since it had no root, it withered away. Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold.' And he said, 'Let anyone with ears to hear listen!'

When he was alone, those who were around him along with the twelve asked him about the parables. And he said to them, "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside, everything comes in parables; in order that
"they may indeed look, but not perceive,
and may indeed listen, but not understand;
so that they may not turn again and be forgiven."'

And he said to them, 'Do you not understand this parable? Then how will you understand all the parables? The sower sows the word. These are the ones on the path where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: when they hear the word, they immediately receive it with joy. But they have no root, and endure only for a while; then, when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. And others are those sown among the thorns: these are the ones who hear the word, but the cares of the world, and the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things come in and choke the word, and it yields nothing. And these are the ones sown on the good soil: they hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirty and sixty and a hundredfold.'

To reflect

And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. Then Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people answered, "Amen, Amen," lifting up their hands. Then they bowed their heads and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground. So they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

Nehemiah 8.5-8

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, *O LORD, my strength and my redeemer.

Psalms 19.14

Jesus unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."

Luke 4. 17b-19

Sight is across readings from the Third Sunday of Epiphany and today's Gospel reading. Whether it's the insight to interpret a parable, sight to see the growth of the word and understanding in the Gospel of Mark's parable of the sower. The people seeing the book of the Law in the reading from Nehemiah, words of the Psalms about words and meditations being acceptable in the Lord's sight (often used by preachers at the beginning of sermons) or giving sight and insight to the blind in Isaiah's prophecy highlighted by Jesus. Sight to see, sight to understand and perceive.

What does sight mean to you in your journey of Christian faith – to ideas of insight and understanding or seeing things that connect you to the divine – landscapes, art, architecture, or something else?

To Listen (these and other suggestions can be found on a Spotify playlist at

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/0F5bU2sf4OiOtQY3q78Rj2?si=a99cbbf61e7d4587>)

- 'Let Me See Jesus' by Matt Redman.
- 'I am Sure I Will See the Goodness of God' by J. Berthier, from Taizé.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.