

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

Gift of Right Judgment Third Week in Ordinary Time Saturday, January 30, 2016
8:15 AM **2 Sm 12:1-7a, 10-17;** Mk 4:35-41 (BVM) (We need to see ourselves as others see us. The Holy Spirit is the Counselor.)

“Then Nathan said to David: ‘You are the man!’”

Nathan today does a great favor to David. He **mirrors to him what he is really like**. Now very often we do not look into any mirror and see ourselves. The reason is that we live in a sort of fun house where all the mirrors are distorted; **we do not see ourselves as we are**. Robert Burns once wrote a poem: “O wad some Pow’r the giftie gie us To see oursels as ithers see us!” That’s Scottish of course: Oh that God would give us the gift to see ourselves as others do. That’s what Nathan did for David. He showed him as others saw him, but not as David could see himself.

What distorts the mirrors in our fun house? Well, it’s **feelings**. That’s one word to use or we could say **biases**; that’s another word for the same thing. We are biased because we have feelings. **Our feelings warp the way we perceive reality**. Now everything is warped, so that’s just part of life. But the point is the warping distorts, and that’s the point. We have to realize we are living in distortion. We are living in a fun house. **We cannot see ourselves objectively**. That is why Nathan was doing David a great service by **telling him a story about himself**, but told in such a way as he didn’t identify with himself. He didn’t identify with himself; so his biases were, as it were, put to rest for a moment. His emotions about himself, his self-emotions were not engaged. He looked at this relatively objectively because he didn’t know it was about himself. **He didn’t know it was an accurate mirror of what he had done, and he was able to reach a very sound judgment. So we all need Nathans in our life.**

Now we are not going to have probably actual living flesh and blood prophets come up to us, but **we do have the Holy Spirit**. The Holy Spirit is the one who sent the prophets in the first

place, the source of the prophetic word. So we are not without **remedy to our biases, to our emotional warping of our perceptions.** We can look more correctly. In fact, one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit we speak of, especially in regard to the sacrament of Confirmation, is **the gift of right judgment, sometimes called “counsel.”** What is right judgment or counsel? It means **looking at oneself as someone else would.** That’s why we have the art and the practice of counseling. We go to counselors and tell them about ourselves, and the counselor is supposed to help us see something that we couldn’t see before. So **the counselor is really a helper to the Holy Spirit,** and the Holy Spirit sometimes is called the “Counselor.” And we need the counsel of the Holy Spirit. We need the gift of right judgment. **We need to see ourselves “as *ithers* see us.”** And only then can we actually make right judgments, and only then can we actually experience true conscience. So there’s always work to be done.