

4th Thursday of Lent “The Glory of God”

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At face value, we have an Old Testament reading about God threatening to punish the people for being stiff-necked and unfaithful to him. In the Gospel reading, that situation is reversed, God in the person of Jesus about to be threatened by the people for revealing that he is the Son of God. I had the question posed to me again yesterday, whether the pandemic was God’s punishment on the world somehow. If you recall my Sunday homily last weekend, the disciples asked Jesus who sinned, the man or his parents, that he is born blind. Jesus responds, neither he nor his parents sinned, it is so that the works of God, the glory of God, can be made visible through him. You may remember that I also posed the question, is God permitting these times to unfold in the way it is unfolding for the same reason, so that God’s works and glory can be made visible through us in this moment of history.

Bishop Barron also makes a good point in his Lenten Gospel Reflections book we gave all of you once upon a time. The reason why the people are threatened by Jesus is because rabbis usually relied on the quotes or example of higher authorities like Moses. Jesus doesn’t do that here in John’s Gospel. He is clearly articulating that he is the authority. Jesus is clearly letting everyone know here that he is the Son of God and that the glory of God is manifested through him. How does that glory of God shine brightest in all of the Gospels including John? God’s glory shines brightest in Jesus’ passion, death and resurrection for the salvation of the whole world.

And so, I would caution that whenever we encounter something counterintuitive in the Old Testament, we should recall that as Christians we interpret the Old Testament in light of the New. God certainly allows times like these to happen through the course of history, and every vine he plants he prunes, not out of anger but out of a sense of love and purpose that is infinitely beyond our ability to comprehend. And so the question I posed last Sunday I think is still relevant today, if we are faced with difficult times right now, what are some ways that we can allow the Glory of God to shine through us? What does that look like? Maybe we need to sit down sometime today and make a list. What are some concrete ways that we can allow Jesus to shine through us today?