

2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of Easter “The Little Black Dot”

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My mother sometimes sends me some of the inspirational stories that get passed along through email (“if you like this...send to three others” kind of thing). Some of them are better than others...along with this one. It is about an elementary school teacher surprising her pupils with a pop quiz. She put a piece of paper face down on all the desks, tells the kids to turn it over at the same time and so to begin writing an essay on what they see. They all turn the paper over and...it is just a blank piece of white paper with a black dot in the middle. And so, all the kids started writing their interpretations about the black dot, where it is located on the page, and what the size of the dot means to them along with a number of metaphors that a black dot could mean. Once the papers were turned in, the teacher read off the responses one by one. Some of what the kids said about the dot was serious, others were humorous. When she was finished, the teacher explained to them that this wasn't a test at all but rather just something for the kids to think about. She explained that the exercise was to write about what they see and every one of them wrote about the black dot but did not notice that most of the paper was in fact white. She explained that it was human nature to focus on the little spots of darkness in our lives and miss all the light that is around us. We find ourselves so preoccupied on the black dot, whatever that means for us or for our world, that we miss all the light, all the goodness, and all the grace and beauty. At least, that is what I remember of the story my mother sent me.

I mention it this day because our Gospel reading from John reports something that Jesus said that really makes a lot of sense when you think about it. Jesus says, “And this is the verdict, that the light came into the world, but people preferred darkness to light...” He is speaking about himself of course. He is the light of the world. However, it does seem to follow that it is difficult to accept Jesus into our lives unless we allow him to shine his light onto our lives and onto the world in which we live. We tend to be too preoccupied with whatever is dark inside of us or in our world today that it keeps us from seeing ourselves, our relationships and the times we live in by the light of God's grace. Through conversion, through prayer, and seeing ourselves and our world more through the light of Jesus' eyes, we would discover that there is a whole lot more of good about us and the world in which we live than there is evil. I think the challenge here is: a disciple of Jesus can see this because a disciple is not preoccupied with the darkness all the time, but recognizes the ocean of light that surrounds the little black dots we are tempted to fixate on. And so, a reflection for today could be...what does that mean for us, for how we view ourselves right now, how we view our relationships, or how we reflect on all the many memories that we carry with us day in and day out...do we focus too much on the little black dot in the middle of whatever piece of paper or do we acknowledge all the light that in reality fills most of our pages in life? Jesus can really help us with this if he let him. We all know that. We are here today because we believe that Jesus is the light of the world.