

Last Friday, Beth, Zoe, Percy and I went to the zoo....

**The sun was out, the temperature while we were there,
was around 52 degrees, and it felt so good to be outside.**

Apparently the animals felt the same way.

**The tiger was walking back and forth,
back and forth and Percy, who is 15 months old kept growling...
the Lion climbed up on a tall rock and sat with his head erect,
surveying his kingdom...
the giraffes...which are Zoe's personal favorite
were actually licking the snow...**

**One species of monkey was all black,
yet actually had this white beard that was perfectly even and
looked as if it had been trimmed!**

**As my daughter Beth and I walked with the kids,
we couldn't help but to relish in the fresh spring air,
Zoe and Percy's delight over seeing such amazing animals.**

**We couldn't help but wonder
of the mystery and beauty of God's handiwork...
realizing that human beings had absolutely nothing to do with the creation
of such magnificence, such diversity and such beauty...
Last Friday morning, it all seemed so miraculous....**

Our reading today could take off in many different directions,

but I would like to focus a bit, upon how differently the Pharisees and the blind man responded to the initiative of Jesus...

So first, let's revisit the scene...

It's a Saturday, the Sabbath, but other than that, there's nothing extraordinary about the day.....

and Jesus is walking down the road when he sees this blind man.

Now, the blind man doesn't ask anything of him...it is all Jesus' initiative..

So Jesus goes over to him and picks up some clay, some dust and spits on it, makes a paste of mud

puts it on the man's eyes...

and lo and behold! the man can see!

But now, of course he has mud all over his eyes,

so Jesus sends off him to clean up

Now, the Pharisees...those rule keeping,

law abiding Jews want to know what is going on!

Who did this?

by whose authority?

On the Sabbath, working...making mud and curing!

This is breaking the law...and, for them, in their way of thinking,

God so loves the law that this healing can not be of God...

this man Jesus can not be from God

because he has broken the law.

The formerly blind man has a different take on the whole thing.

He put mud on my eyes, I washed it off and now I can see...

But yet, the story continues to evolve...

**the Pharisees begin to disagree with each other,
and things really heat up and they drive the formerly blind man out of the Temple...
The Pharisees are in a tizzy, to say the least!
They are arguing and they completely lose sight, no pun intended,
of the miracle that had just occurred!**

**The blind man doesn't worry about such rules and regulations....
he accepts what is offered to him with innocence and simplicity.
He kept his heart and his mind open...and receives the gift of sight..**

**His physical blindness actually offered him the freedom
not to be caught up in preconceived notions of who could heal and when.
He was open to the miracle of his healing when it was offered ...
and he was willing to acknowledge the Messiahship of Jesus....**

**The Pharisees, on the other hand, were imprisoned by
their preconceived notions of who could heal and when
They were not open to the miracle of the man's healing and
all they could do was end up in arguments and strife...**

So of course, the questions for us is:

**Are we FREE to see the miracles being offered on ordinary days, in everyday places
with simplicity and innocence?**

**or we imprisoned by our expectations and our preconceived notions of what miracles
should look like and when they can happen and end up in strife and discontent?**

**Are we blind to the wondrous nature of the universe even though our eyes can see?
or are our minds and hearts open to the amazing,
outstanding and miraculous nature of life itself?**

**What are our criteria for determining what is or is not a miracle in our lives?
Is the breaking of the first daffodils through the winter ground considered a miracle?
Is the smile of a stranger a miracle?**

**Are the waves of migrating sand hill cranes over head a miracle
or are they simply nice things happening?**

**I used to think miracles were beneficial, but *totally* unnatural events,
that could not be logically explained...**

But with that understanding my experience of miracles was limited to almost nil...

**But once I opened my heart and my mind to the wonder and the beauty
of everyday life, ordinary life...**

once I became more open to what is with simplicity and innocence....

miracles appeared everywhere!

Now, everything is holy...everything is a miracle!

The morning's sunrise...

fresh spring air...

sunshine after weeks of cloudy days...

**Let's pause for a moment and please think of the miracles
that you experienced today...*PAUSE*....**

The presence of the God reverberates throughout creation...

**If we are willing to let go of our preconceived notions and
expectations of how and where and through whom God can work...**

if we willing to look with hearts open wide

if we are willing to see what is right in front of us with simplicity and innocence...

we will see miracles everywhere

because...

God works in the mud and in the spit of everyday life...

So, of course, the only real question is:

are we willing? amen.