

Jesus asks the question from us through today's Gospel: 'Can one blind man guide another? Surely both will fall into a pit'. In Jesus time people dug pits not to throw their enemies into it, but for a very practical reason: they were looking for underground water, because as you know water was a precious thing in Judea, just as it is today, as Judea, or today's Israel, is an arid, dry land.

'Can one blind man guide another?' Jesus asks this question from parents, grandparents and friends of every age. Are you spiritually blind or a visionary? I believe most of you can think of someone who is entrusted to you to give him or her some form of spiritual guidance, advise or direction. You may not be able to answer right now, but when you go home ask this question again from yourself.

How do you know whether spiritually you can see properly? We believe that Jesus is the light of the world, He is the light of life. In order to be a light for others and help them to see you need to entrust yourself to Jesus the light of the world, and for that you need to renew your commitment to Him again and again. You need to be utterly dedicated to Christ, if you want to bring his spiritual light to others, *so that they can find their way back to the Father.*

The criteria for a good authentic spiritual guide is this:

1. Christ lives in him/her and he/she lives in Christ; s/he doesn't only talk about Christ and points at Him, but he/she is in Christ; he or she is a light of the world or salt for the earth. *A Good spiritual guide can already see the ways God's Spirit is showing, and can show that way for those who are entrusted to him/her.*

2. A good spiritual guide also acknowledges his/her need for a saviour, and he or she knows from experience that he or she is saved by Christ, because he or she has acknowledged his or her sins, and experienced the grace and power of forgiveness, and because of that he or she has surrendered his/her life to Christ. *Thus he can encourage others also to seek mercy and forgiveness. Without a desire for reconciliation there is no basis for seeking communion with the heavenly Father, which is the ultimate purpose of our life journey.*

One of our most powerful contemporary evangelisers, Bishop Robert Barron, gave once a very down to earth description of what authentic evangelisation is.

He said evangelisation is when one starving man tells another one where to find bread, because he himself has found bread.

Sharing experience is much more powerful for today's generations than mere talk and theories. Actions speak much louder than words. Jesus says: 'Every tree can be told by its own fruit.' *People are much more willing to believe the person who has shown the fruits of his faith in practice.* Your words will have much more effect on those who are entrusted to you spiritually, if they see that you don't just talk, but also live what you say or believe in. Remember your children and grandchildren don't just listen to your words, but also watch your life and judge you on that basis. You can speak about confession and encourage your children to go to confession, but if you don't lead by example they *will be less willing* to go to confession.

So if you want to be a good spiritual advisor or guide first of all to those who really matter in your life, then live in Christ, be his light, have a real taste of his mercy and lead by example.