Reflection on the Scripture: John 9:1-41

I didn’t mind it when I went into my Market Basket and there were no carts so I had to go outside again and follow someone who was heading to her car. I didn’t mind it when there was no rice and only the “Hot” enchilada sauce that is way too spicy for my New England Yankee self. I didn’t mind it when they didn’t have the Hood Peanut Butter Cup ice cream and I had to compromise with the Hood Red Sox Caramel Comeback (with the little chocolate Red Sox socks that have caramel on the inside – so good).

But when the line to get to the registers started in the produce section, that I minded. Not because I mind waiting in line, because I’m o.k. with that when that’s the most efficient way to get a ton of people through a grocery store as efficiently as possible. What I minded was what was going to happen at some point in the next 30 minutes, between the oranges and the conveyor belt at the checkout.

Someone was going to appear from the Brillo pad aisle and try to cut the line. And it was going to get awful. Everyone was tired and on edge and everyone had been waiting in line. And we had struck up little conversations with each

other, and nudged along each other’s carts when someone remembered they needed bleach or another box of Triscuits. We were a little neighborhood.

So, we were looking for that person who was going to cut the line. It was like a military array of radar dishes all scanning for incoming missiles. All the abuelitas, and mama bears who had been making up games for six-year-olds and foot sore ministers in their work out clothes. We were all looking for that person who was going to pretend they hadn’t seen the line we were in.

And there he was. I could see everyone tensing up. When this woman who had to be six feet tall, with fabulous hair and nails, walked right up to him. “Oh, honey,” she said, “I don’t want you to get cussed out by all these nice ladies. The line starts back in Produce. Why don’t you start there like everyone else, because none of us want to wait in this line either? I think you’d be a wise man to do that, son.” And off he went.

We had all seen him. But none of us saw him like she did. None of us was prepared to do a single thing to help him save face. All of us could only see that he was trying to take our place in line. And we weren’t going to have that. She saw him and she saw us and she saw the situation and she stepped right in with a real solution. She saw what was going on and she acted with loving compassion. Not by letting him into the line, but by keeping him from being cursed by at least 35 people.

In the reading, clearly John is playing with ideas of light, sight, and really seeing what’s in front of you. The man born blind is there, Jesus is there, but there are Pharisees and neighbors and the man’s parents. Everyone is reporting what they saw to everyone else, and no one, not one person, is seeing what Jesus had really done, except for the man born blind.

Take a minute and look forward (yes, I did that on purpose) to the week that is coming, with all the unknowns that the virus will throw in your path. For all the things you can’t see, all the blind and dark spots, where are the places where you know you’ll see God’s light? Walking with your dog? Singing with the radio on your way to work? Checking on that elderly neighbor you’re not so friendly with, just in case they need something from the grocery?

[I’ll let you think for a minute]

The light you know how to look for, it’s also there in all the blind and dark spots. It’s just harder to see. So when you’re in the parts of next week that are dark, if you can’t find the light, see if you can find the people who are pointing to it. Like the magnificent woman with the scarlet nails.