

The Lame Leading the Blind



She tapped her way very tentatively along Shower's Drive in Mountain View - a very elderly, white-haired lady with a long, white cane. Her progress was glacial. She was about 100 yards shy of El Camino Real - one of the busiest intersections in the area - when I spotted her. I pulled my car into a little lay-by that housed a Subway and a few other fast food outlets, and went back onto the sidewalk. As I walked up behind her, I could hear her say repeatedly in a tiny feeble voice, "Help me; help me!" Most of the blind people I've known are quite decisive in their use of the white cane, and seem to have extremely accurate internalized maps of their terrain and destination. But not this lady. Her cane hesitated and cast about hopelessly, as if it didn't really trust the feedback it was getting.

Meanwhile she continued to call out, "Help me; help me!" in such a tiny voice that most of the passersby didn't even realize she was in difficulties. I touched her elbow and asked, "Do you want me to lead you across El Camino?" "Good heavens, no!" she cried in a panic, "I'm trying to get to Wal-Mart." Wal-Mart was about a quarter of mile behind her off Shower's Drive so, judging by her pace, she must have passed it 20 minutes ago. At that instant another lady, an elderly African American woman, who was coming from the direction of El Camino, stopped and said, "I can take you to Wal-Mart; I'm going there myself." Now this African American lady was driving a motorized wheelchair! I thanked her profusely as I helped turn the blind lady about and come to the left hand side of the wheelchair. Since the controls were on the right hand arm of

the wheelchair, the African American elder had to offer the White elder her left hand. This took some reorganizing because the White lady was obviously right handed and finding it quite difficult to use her cane with her left hand. Eventually we got it sorted out.

I stood and watched as these two elders walk-drove very slowly back along Shower's Drive. Big, fat tears coursed down my face. I was watching the lame leading the blind.

I'm sure Jesus would have made a brilliant parable of it.

Namasté,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sean". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the word "Namasté,".

Tír na nÓg
June, 2014