

Reflection Questions

- What do you want Jesus to do for you?
- The blind man in this week's gospel reading is rebuked by those around him who seem to be annoyed by his antics. Have you experienced any similar resistance as you've cried to the Lord for help?
- Not all of us spring into action immediately upon being called by God. What barriers have gotten in the way of taking action and following Him along the way?

30th Sunday in Ordinary Time



One of the beautiful traditions of the Catholic Church is found in the unity of its liturgical calendar. This follows a pattern of remembrances, feast days, and seasons that commemorate our Lord and foster spiritual development among the faithful throughout the world. On a daily and weekly basis, scripture readings are chosen to follow the spiritual movement of this universal calendar and often build upon each other to enrich our understanding of God and our relationship with Him.

As we currently make our way through chapter ten of Mark's gospel, we can contrast this week's story with those of the past two weeks. Recall the rich man who asked Jesus how he can inherit eternal life, only to go away sad when Jesus tells him to sell all he has and follow Him. Last week, Jesus asks James and John, "What do you want me to do for you?" Seeking honor and power, they reply, "Grant that in your glory we may sit one at your right and the other at your left." Jesus offers correction to the disciples by stressing the importance of service and following *the Way*.

This week's gospel reading picks up as Jesus, along with his disciples and a small crowd, are on the road toward Jerusalem where he will die. A blind man, Bartimaeus, was begging on the side of the road when Jesus passed by:

*"Jesus, son of David, have pity on me."
And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent.
But he kept calling out all the more,
"Son of David, have pity on me."
Jesus stopped and said, "Call him."
So they called the blind man, saying to him,
"Take courage; get up, Jesus is calling you."
He threw aside his cloak, sprang up, and came to
Jesus.
Jesus said to him in reply, "What do you want me to
do for you?"
The blind man replied to him, "Master, I want to see."
Jesus told him, "Go your way; your faith has saved
you."
Immediately he received his sight
and followed him on the way.*

When asked the same question as James and John, the blind man's response is simple, "Master, I want to see." This can be taken as a request for spiritual renewal, something Jesus is always willing to honor. It is likely that we've found ourselves in a similar position somewhere along our recovery journey. We can learn much from the attitude and behavior of Bartimaeus as Jesus calls him. Unlike the rich man who goes away sad, he immediately springs to action and responds to Jesus's call. It probably helps that he is not weighed down by other unhealthy attachments.

The twelve steps are designed to give sight to the blind and offer the opportunity to follow Jesus with joy and courage. We gain spiritual sight—some kind of "insight"—to see beyond our denial and view the world through new lenses. Insight can only go so far when it lacks movement or is fueled by self-seeking motives. The work we do turns self-awareness and God-awareness into life-changing action.

The tone of this week's gospel reading reflects gratitude and joy on behalf of Bartimaeus. You might find the same kind of joy expressed by those that have known the darkness of active addiction and now experience a new freedom and happiness in recovery. Recognition of this tone is found in this week's responsorial psalm (Psalm 126) as we sing, "The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy."

We communicate our gratitude and joy for what the Lord has done by passing on what has been shared with us to others. We continue to discuss what it was like, what happened, and what life is like now. Our identity lies in Christ and can be summarized by simply noting, "I was blind, but now I see."