

30th Sunday in Ordinary Time



One of the beautiful traditions of the Catholic Church is found in the unity of its liturgical calendar. It 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 and love of God.

As we make our way through chapter ten of Mark's Gospel, we 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 told him to sell all he has and follow him. Last week, Jesus asked 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 his way.

This Sunday'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 named 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's 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 for him. Unlike the rich man who goes away sad, he immediately springs to action and responds to Jesus's call. It helps that he is not weighed down by other unhealthy attachments or expectations.

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 when coupled with community.

The tone of this week's Sunday Gospel Reading reflects gratitude and joy on behalf of Bartimaeus. You might see the same kind of joy expressed by those who have known the darkness of family addiction and now experience a new freedom and happiness in recovery. Recognition of this tone is found in this week's Responsorial 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 freely 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."

- What do you want Jesus to do for you?
- The blind man in this Sunday's Gospel Reading is rebuked by those who seem annoyed by his antics. How do you overcome similar resistance when reaching to the Lord for help?
- Not all of us spring right into action when called by God. What has stood in your way of following Him?

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Sunday Mass Readings this Week

1st Reading: Jeremiah 31:7-9

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6

2nd Reading: Hebrews 5:1-6

Gospel: Mark 10:46-52