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30th Sunday of Ordinary Time The Blind Bartimaeus

Lessons and Discussions

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“Go your way; your faith has saved you.”

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“What do you want me to do for you?”

Page 12 – Don’t Your Chance

“Take courage; get up, he is calling you.”

Introit Entrance Antiphon – Roman Missal

This should be chanted so that the time of prayer, study and discussion can be made sacred.

*Letetur cor**Ps 105 (104): 3, 4*

II
L ET the hearts of those who seek the Lord
rejoice; * seek the Lord and be strengthened; seek his
face for e-vergence.

Alternate options:

Faith of Our Fathers
Now Thank We All Our God
O God, Our Help in Ages Past
Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven
All in All
Holy and Anointed One
Open the Eyes of My Heart
Light of the World (Remnant)

Collect – Roman Missal

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Almighty ever living God,
increase our faith, hope and charity,
and make us love what you command,
so that we may merit what you promise.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Gospel Reading – Mark 10:46-52 – Roman Missal

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark
- Glory to you O Lord

As Jesus was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a sizable crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind man, the son of Timaeus, sat by the roadside begging. On hearing that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "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.

The Gospel of the Lord.
- Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

Spiritual Reading – Office of Readings - 30th Sunday of Ordinary Time Cycle B

From the prologue of the commentary on Isaiah by Saint Jerome, priest
"Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ"

I interpret as I should, following the command of Christ: *Search the Scriptures, and Seek and you shall find.* Christ will not say to me what he said to the Jews: *You erred, not knowing the Scriptures and not knowing the power of God.* For if, as Paul says, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God, and if the man who does not know Scripture does not know the power and wisdom of God, then ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ.

Therefore, I will imitate the head of a household who brings out of his storehouse things both new and old, and says to his spouse in the Song of Songs: *I have kept for you things new and old, my beloved.* In this way permit me to explain Isaiah, showing that he was not only a prophet, but an evangelist and an apostle as well. For he says about himself and the other evangelists: *How beautiful are the feet of those who preach good news,*

of those who announce peace. And God speaks to him as if he were an apostle: Whom shall I send, who will go to my people? And he answers: Here I am; send me.

No one should think that I mean to explain the entire subject matter of this great book of Scripture in one brief sermon, since it contains all the mysteries of the Lord. It prophesies that Emmanuel is to be born of a virgin and accomplish marvelous works and signs. It predicts his death, burial and resurrection from the dead as the Savior of all men. I need say nothing about the natural sciences, ethics and logic. Whatever is proper to holy Scripture, whatever can be expressed in human language and understood by the human mind, is contained in the book of Isaiah. Of these mysteries the author himself testifies when he writes: *You shall be given a vision of all things, like words in a sealed scroll. When they give the writings to a wise man, they will say: Read this. And he will reply: I cannot, for it is sealed. And when the scroll is given to an uneducated man and he is told: Read this, he will reply: I do not know how to read.*

Should this argument appear weak to anyone, let him listen to the Apostle: *Let two or three prophets speak, and let others interpret; if, however, a revelation should come to one of those who are seated there, let the first one be quiet.* How can they be silent, since it depends on the Spirit who speaks through his prophets whether they remain silent or speak? If they understood what they were saying, all things would be full of wisdom and knowledge. But it was not the air vibrating with the human voice that reached their ears, but rather it was God speaking within the soul of the prophets, just as another prophet says: *It is an angel who spoke in me; and again, Crying out in our hearts, Abba, Father, and I shall listen to what the Lord God says within me.*

Responsory – Office of Readings

All Scripture is inspired by God and is valuable for teaching and for showing the way to holiness,
 –so that the man of God might become fully qualified and equipped for every good work.

The wise son is one who keeps God’s law.

–So that the man of God might become fully qualified and equipped for every good work.

our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn, then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy towards us; and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of they womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

“The End” Notes

- [1] Fr. Gabriel, Divine Intimacy, Vol. IV, pg. 158
- [2] St. Augustine, In Io 13:5
- [3] Acts 17:26-28
- [4] 1 Timothy 2:1-4
- [5] Saint Albert the Great
- [6] Psalm 16:3-6
- [7] Romans 1:20-21
- [8] Romans 1:28-29
- [9] St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica
- [10] Catechism of the Catholic Church; Glossary
- [11] Catechism of the Catholic Church; 158
- [12] 1 Peter 5:8-9
- [13] Fr. Gabriel, Divine Intimacy, Vol. IV, pg. 158
- [14] Fr. Gabriel, Divine Intimacy, Vol. IV, pg. 158
- [15] J. Escriva, Friends of God, 195-198
- [16] Mk. 10:38
- [17] Mk. 1:40
- [18] CCC 548
- [19] Footnotes NAB Matthew 20:29-34
- [20] St. Bernard, Homily on the First Sunday of Advent, 78
- [21] CCC 2616
- [22] Navarre Bible Commentary, St. Mark pg. 144
- [23] J. Escriva, Friends of God, 195-198
- [24] Fernandez, In Conversation with God, 5, 56.2
- [25] St. John Chrysostom, Hom. On St. Matthew, 66
- [26] Fernandez, In Conversation with God, 5, 56.2
- [27] <http://thelastmartyrdom.com>; The Jesus Prayer
- [28] cf. S. Augustine, Sermon 88, 13
- [29] St. John Chrysostom, Hom. On St. Matthew, 66
- [30] St. John Chrysostom, Hom. On St. Matthew, 66
- [31] Fernandez, In Conversation with God, 5, 56.2
- [32] J. Escriva, Friends of God, 195-198
- [33] *ibid.*
- [34] *ibid.*
- [35] Romans 8:38-39
- [36] J. Escriva, Friends of God, 195-198

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

Marian Antiphon – Salve Regina – Simple Tone

IV. ANTIPHON SALVE REGINA, SIMPLE TONE
From First Vespers of the Feast of the Blessed Trinity to None on Saturday
before the First Sunday of Advent.

Ant.
5.

Salve, Re-gi-na, * ma-ter mi-se-ri-córdi-æ: Vi-ta, dulcê-do, et spes nostra,
salve. Ad te clamâmus, éxsu-les, fî-li-i Hevæ Ad te suspi-râmus,
gemén-tes et flentes in hac lacrimâ-rum valle. E-ia ergo, Advocá-ta
nostra, il-los tu-os mi-se-ri-córdes ócu-los ad nos convér-te. Et Je-sum,
bene-díctum fructum ventris tu-i, nobis post hoc exsí-li-um osténde.
O clemens: O pi-a: O dulcis * Virgo Ma-rí-a.

V. Ora pro nobis, sancta Dei Genitrix.

R. Ut digni efficiamur promissionibus Christi

Let us pray. O almighty and everlasting God, who, by the cooperation of the Holy Ghost, didst prepare the body and soul of Mary, glorious Virgin and Mother, to become the worthy habitation of Thy Son: grant that we may be delivered from present evils, and from everlasting death, by her gracious intercession, in whose commemoration we rejoice. Through the same Christ our Lord, Thy Son, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end. Amen.

English Translation

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness, and

Liturgy of Light, Joy, and Faith – Lesson and Discussion

“Go your way; your faith has saved you.”

Today’s readings for can be summed up in three words: light, joy, and faith.

Where do we see these themes in the readings?

Activity – light, joy, and faith

This can be done in many different ways. Look at the first reading (Jer. 31:7-9), the Responsorial Psalm (Ps. 126:1-6), and the Gospel Reading (Mk. 10:46-52). Have the group count how many times the themes light, joy, and faith (and their counterparts, blindness/darkness, sorrow, salvation). Depending on the size of the group, you can break into three groups, with each group focused on finding the three themes in one of the readings. Another option is to have each group focus on one of the themes in all of the three readings.

- “Shout with joy for Jacob” (Jer. 31:7) (joy)
- “proclaim your praise and say.” (Jer. 31:7) (joy)
- “The Lord has saved his people” (Jer. 31:7) (salvation)
- “the blind and the lame in their midst” (Jer. 31:8)(blind/sorrow)
- “With weeping they shall come” (Jer. 31:9) (sorrow)
- “but with compassion I will guide them” (Jer. 31:9) (joy)
- “our tongues sang for joy” (Psalm 126:2) (joy)
- “Oh, how happy we were!” (Psalm 126:2) (joy)
- “Those who sow in tears will reap with cries of joy” (Psalm 126:5) (joy/sorrow)
- “Those who go forth weeping...Will return with cries of joy” (Psalm 126:6) (joy/sorrow)
- “a blind man...sat by the roadside begging” (Mk. 10:46) (blind)
- “Son of David, have pity on me” (Mk. 10:47,48) (faith)
- “He threw aside his cloak, sprang up, and came to Jesus” (Mk. 10:50) (joy)
- “Master, I want to see.” (Mk. 10:51) (faith, light)
- “your faith has saved you.” (Mk. 10:52) (faith)
- “Immediately he received his sight” (Mk. 10:52) (light)
- “followed him on the way” (Mk. 10:52) (faith)

How is light portrayed in the Gospel reading? The light is portrayed in two levels: First, to be able to see. He wanted to be set free from the darkness of being blind. The second level is the

light of faith that has saved him. While the blind man cannot see it is his faith that lights up his soul to cry out to the Lord because "...even though physically blind, he is clear sighted in spirit, and recognizes in Jesus, the Messiah, the 'Son of David'." [1] Once he is able to see, the blind man begins to follow Christ in discipleship. "O God, you offer bodily light to the eyes of the body; can you not offer to the pure of heart the inextinguishable light that remains entire and never grows less?...With you is the fountain of life, and in your light we shall see light...O Word, you are the fountain and at the same time the light: you are the fountain for one athirst, and light for the blind. Open my eyes to see the light, and open wide my heart's mouth that I may drink at the fountain; I drink what I see and hear. My God you are everything to me, you are everything I love...You are my all: if I am hungry, you are my Bread, if I am thirsty, you are my water, if I am in darkness, you are my light because you are ever unconsumed, if I am naked, you are for me the vesture of immortality, when the corruptible will be clothed in incorruptibility, and what is mortal will put on immortality." [2] **How many of us have been set free of our sins, have seen the error of our ways, but have failed to follow Jesus on the way?**

What do we do if we are trying to find something? If we are seeking something, we usually do so in the light. We will search for what is lost in the daylight or turn on the lights. In the introit of today's Liturgy taken from Psalm 105:3-4. In the introit we chant, "seek the Lord...seek the Lord...seek his face". Not only is Jesus what we seek, but He is the very light which allows us to find what we seek. The human heart longs for God and thus seeks God. We believe that God can be found and that He gives us not only the desire to seek Him, but the grace necessary to find that whom we seek.

Can everyone find God? Yes. Saint Paul, in speaking to pagans at the Areopagus, said, "He made from one the whole human race to dwell on the entire surface of the earth, and he fixed the ordered seasons and the boundaries of their regions, so that people might seek God, even perhaps grope for him and find him, though indeed he is not far from any one of us for 'In him we live and move and have our being,' as even some of your poets have said, 'For we too are his offspring.'" [3] Not only did God create us with a desire for Him, but it is actually the will of God that we find Him and know, love, and serve Him. Our prayers for light and truth are "good and pleasing to God our savior, who wills everyone to be saved and to come to knowledge of the

Do we only have one chance? Yes and no. We only have one life to live here on earth, so in that sense we do only have one chance. However, God does not only call us once, he calls us constantly! "Bear in mind that our Lord is seeking us at every moment: get up, he tells us, put aside your indolence, your easy life, your petty selfishness, your silly little problems. Get up from the ground, where you are lying prostrate and shapeless. Acquire height, weight and volume, and a supernatural outlook." [34]

How do we not miss our chance? We must realize Jesus is near us everyday. He is available to us in the tabernacle in every Catholic Church. If we turn to God, He is already there waiting for us. Nothing can separate us from God in this world. As it says in the Wednesday Morning Prayer Week II reading from Romans, "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." [35] "Never forget that Christ cannot be reached without sacrifice. We have to get rid of everything that gets in the way: greatcoat, haversack, water bottle. You have to do the same in this battle for the glory of God, in this struggle of love and peace by which we are trying to spread Christ's kingdom. In order to serve the Church, the Pope and all souls, you must be ready to give up everything superfluous..." [36]

Profession of Faith or Popular Devotion – The Jesus Prayer

This is an ancient and simple prayer. If you do not have the act of contrition prayer memorized, this can be used in substitution during one's confession. St. Augustine said about this prayer, "He prays for us as our priest, prays in us as our Head, and is prayed to by us as our God. Therefore let us acknowledge our voice in him and his in us." (St. Augustine, En. In Ps. 85, 1: PL 37, 1081; cf. GILH 7.) The Jesus prayer can be said throughout the day or one can use a prayer rope or rosary. If a rosary is used on each bead the prayer below would be prayed.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner!

our obstacles, we can obtain all that we want and need from God. “The blind man overcame the obstacles of his environment and obtained his heart’s desire.”[31]

MOVIE – Back to the Future – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 3:29

<http://youtu.be/QzklMXES1BU>

A little back story: in the movie George McFly was suppose to see a different person in the car instead of Biff. This is why he was surprised to see him in the car. Although the situation was not the way he had planned, he did not back down. He knew this was his one chance to “win the girl”. For the blind man, his circumstances, although imperfect, did not keep him from calling out to Jesus and he did not miss his chance to gain sight.

Was there anyone out there for the blind man and not against him?

Yes. Remember after Jesus calls for Bartimaeus, some of the people tell him Jesus is calling him. “And Jesus stopped, and told them to call him.’ Some of the better people in the crowd turned to the blind man and said, ‘Take heart; rise, he is calling you.’ Here you have the Christian vocation! ... And throwing of his mantle the man sprang up and came to Jesus. He threw off his mantle!”[32]

Why does throwing off his mantle matter? St. Jose Maria Escriva explains it best: “I don’t know if you have ever lived through a war, but many years ago I had occasion to visit a battlefield shortly after an engagement. There, strewn all over the ground, were greatcoats, water bottles, haversacks stuffed with family souvenirs, letters, photographs of loved ones...which belonged, moreover, not to the vanquished but to the victors! All these items had become superfluous in the bid to race forward and leap over the enemy defenses. Just as happened to Bartimaeus, as he raced towards Christ.”[33]

MUSIC – This Is Your Life by Switchfoot – POP CULTURE CONNECTION 4:19

<http://youtu.be/gzxDw1sxMCI>

Bartimaeus was not who he wanted to be; he wanted more and knew that only Christ could give this to him. It was not just sight that Bartimaeus wanted, because it that had been the case, after being healed, he would have continued about his life doing what he willed. Rather though, he wanted Christ, life to the full, and so he “followed him on the way.” **Is our life what we want it to be? Is there more?**

truth.”[4] God has given us reason and so we should use this reason to come to know the truth. “The noblest power of man is reason. The highest goal of reason is the knowledge of God.”[5]

What happens when we find God? First, we are at peace, as Saint Paul says, we will “lead a quiet and tranquil life in all devotion and dignity”. Second we will rejoice, be strengthened, and have life eternal, seeing His face forevermore. This resulting peace, strength, and union with God is different from the consequence of those who seek false gods. “Worthless are all the false gods of the land. Accursed are all who delight in them. They multiply their sorrows who court other gods. Blood libations to them I will not pour out, nor will I take their names upon my lips. Lord, my allotted portion and my cup, you have made my destiny secure. Pleasant places were measured out for me, fair to me indeed is my inheritance.”[6]

If we are built to find God and God wants us to find Him, why are there so many who can’t find Him? Saint Albert the Great once said, “The highest goal of reason is the knowledge of God”, but unfortunately not all use their reason toward the highest goal. When we misuse something, including our reason, it is rendered useless. Saint Paul says, “Ever since the creation of the world, his invisible attributes of eternal power and divinity have been able to be understood and perceived in what he has made. As a result, they have no excuse; for although they knew God they did not accord him glory as God or give him thanks. Instead, they became vain in their reasoning, and their senseless minds were darkened.”[7] Saint Paul is speaking of people that “knew God” but yet they became vain in their reasoning and the minds were darkened. God desires us to know Him, and He gives us the ability and reason to know Him, but He also gives us free will. We must use our reason to freely choose Him whom has chosen us, but when or if we don’t “...see fit to acknowledge God, God handed them over to their undiscerning mind to do what is improper. They are filled with every form of wickedness, evil, greed, and malice; full of envy, murder, rivalry, treachery, and spite.”[8] There are many who can’t find God because they do not use their reason to choose God. With reason, comes faith, the two working together like two lungs or the two wings of a bird. Saint Thomas Aquinas sums up faith and reasoning by saying that there are “some points of intelligibility in God, accessible to human reason, and other points that altogether transcend the power of human reason.”[9] For the points that transcend the power of human reason, we are given the theological

virtue of faith.

If we can know God through reason, why is faith necessary?

We must remember that faith is from God alone. It is not something that was thought up by man. Faith is something that is given to us. It is something that once it is spoken to us strikes us right between the eyes and touches our soul. Once faith is received and we have some understanding, the next step is to give adherence and assent to that which we understand. Adherence is our fidelity to what we understand and assent is our commitment to act upon or follow that which we understand. Faith is, “a gift of God and a human act by which the believer gives personal adherence to God who invites his response, and freely assents to the whole truth that God has revealed.”[10] “Faith seeks understanding.”[11]

MOVIE – Al Pacino - Scent of a Woman – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 0:22

<http://youtu.be/K9Ounki94-w>

Faith helps us to acknowledge, through our adherence and assent, that which we have heard and understood. What would hearing and understanding mean without action. There is a military slang word “HUA” or “Hooah” that is short for Heard, Understood, and Acknowledge. It is not enough to hear and understand we must acknowledge, through our adherence and assent. Al Pacino says in this movie that he clearly *knew* what was right in life, but did not choose what was right; he did not give adherence and assent because it was too hard. It is only through faith that we can stand firm. No one knew this better than Saint Peter, who wrote, “Be sober and vigilant. Your opponent the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, steadfast in faith...”[12]

How is faith shown in today’s readings? In Jeremiah, the people of Israel had faith in God that they would return back to Israel, even if it were just a small remnant of people. In the Gospel, we see the blind man’s faith as he shouts out to get Jesus’ attention. “Faith prevents him from keeping quiet; he is certain that he will find salvation in Jesus.”[13] Look at the Gospel reading and think of one’s personal life. Are we living as the blind man, knowing that because of our sin, we have a darkened perception of the world, and therefore shout to the Lord for forgiveness and to bring us back into perfect union with Him? Or are we going to be like the crowd, mocking others who are seeking God or even worse, tell them to be quiet and sit back down?

profession of faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior though invoking and meditating on the very name of Christ and asking him for forgiveness: ‘Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ ‘If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.’ (Rom. 10:9-10) ‘For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ (Rom. 10:13)”[27] The Jesus prayer can be found in the Popular Devotion section of this packet.

If Jesus is always within range why do I need to cry out to Him? Jesus never forces Himself on us. We are the ones who have to cry out to Him. We have to open our hearts to allow Him to work within us. We should never put this off, but be like the blind man, who as St. Augustine said, “feared that Jesus would pass by and never return.”[28] We should never let a day go by without calling out to Jesus for His divine mercy and grace.

However, just as Bartimaeus discovered, there are people out there who want to quiet us. There are people who can be an obstacle to our Lord. **How are the people an obstacle to the blind man?** “Many rebuked him, telling him to be silent.’ As people have done to you, when you sense that Jesus was passing your way. Your heart beat faster and you too began to cry out, prompted by an intimate longing. Then your friends, the need to do the done thing, the easy life, your surroundings, all conspired to tell you: ‘Keep quiet, don’t cry out. Who are you to be calling Jesus? Don’t bother him.”[29] **What sort of things people have said to you to keep you quiet about your faith? What obstacles have people tried to put in your path to Jesus? In what ways have we been an obstacle to others, preventing them from crying out to Jesus?**

How does the blind man overcome these obstacles? How does God help us overcome our obstacles? “But poor Bartimaeus would not listen to them. He cried out all the more: ‘Son of David, have mercy on me.’ Our Lord, who had heard him right from the beginning, let him persevere in his prayer. He does the same with you. Jesus hears our cries from the very first, but he waits. He wants us to be convinced that we need him. He wants us to beseech him, to persist, like the blind man waiting by the road from Jericho. ‘Let us imitate him. Even if God does not immediately give us what we ask, even if many people try to put us off our prayers, let us still go on praying”[30]. If we can overcome

“look” for Him in our life. We can reflect upon the loving presence of God in our life, even by the minute. We can write down how we experienced God in a journal, share His presence online through social media, and give God praise and glory in our conversations. If we but *begin* to “look” for Him, we *will* “see” Him. We need to make ourselves aware of the presence of God. For example, after buying a new model car, a person may start to notice how many other cars on the road are the same models as theirs. Did all of those cars just spring up overnight? No, of course not! Those other cars were always there, but we never had a reason to notice or care. God is always present, and we have every reason to notice and care.

Don't Your Chance – Lesson and Discussion

“Take courage; get up, he is calling you.”

The blind man made the most of an opportunity to be in the presence of God. He knew he had nothing to lose and everything to gain from crying out to Jesus. We too must not be afraid to cry out to God and so that we don't miss our chance to ask for God to intervene.

MUSIC – “Lose Yourself” by Eminem [clean version] – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 5:22

<http://youtu.be/VYwUq8-vIsQ>

The song directs us to not miss a chance to seize what we want. There will be trials and people who want to bring us down, but it is possible to overcome them.

Why does the blind man cry out? “He sensed that this was his moment. How long he had been waiting for this opportunity!”[24] How long have we waited for our opportunity? “Don't you feel the same urge to cry out? You who also are awaiting at the side of the way, of this highway of life that is so very short? You who need more light, you who need more grace to make up your mind to seek holiness? Don't you feel an urgent need to cry out, ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me?’ What a beautiful aspiration for you to repeat again and again!”.[25] “What a wonderful example for us to follow! For Christ is always within range of our voice, of our prayer. He is passing close by us so that we will not be afraid to call to him.”[26]

The blind man's prayer, the “Jesus Prayer”, is a holy and ancient method of constant prayer devised by the monastic fathers and mothers of the early Church, which serves as an ongoing

How is joy shown in the readings? God gives all His people joy when he brings them back from exile. They shed tears of joy. In the Gospel, the man springs up and runs to Jesus in joy for he was heard, and in faith knows Jesus can do all things.

Why do some not jump up in joy to run to Christ when they hear him coming? “The darkened eyes of the blind man are illuminated and see Jesus: seeing him and following him are all one. The interior light corresponds to the exterior, and Bartimaeus sets out to follow the Lord. Like him, a Christian is one who has been ‘enlightened’ by Christ; faith has opened his eyes: it has made him know God and the Son of God made man.”[14]

What do we want from Christ? – Lesson and Discussion

“What do you want me to do for you?”

Once Jesus asks for the blind man, Bartimaeus, to come to Him Jesus asks an interesting question, “What do you want me to do for you?” We must realize that at the moment Bartimaeus begins the conversation with the Son of God, Jesus asks him what he wants done for Jesus to do for him. Let's look deeper into Jesus' questions and Bartimaeus' response.

What is the meaning behind the dialogue? “And now begins a dialogue with God, a marvelous dialogue that moves us and sets our hearts on fire, for you and I are now Bartimaeus. Christ, who is God begins to speak and asks, ‘What do you want me to do for you?’ The blind man answers. ‘Lord, that I may see.’ How utterly logical! How about yourself, can you really see? Haven't you too experienced at times what happened to the blind man of Jericho? In short, our lips should express a true desire on our part to correspond effectively to our Creator's promptings, striving to follow out his plans with unshakeable faith, being fully convinced that he cannot fail us...”[15]

If you recall last Sunday's Gospel reading, Jesus asks this same question to James and John, but the outcome is very different for them. Why does Jesus grant the blind man's request and not the apostles? The blind man's request is very logical. He asks in humble faith to have sight. His request is different from James and John because as Jesus says, “You do not know what you are asking.”[16] James and John were nearly demanding Jesus to grant their wish, as if He was a genie or ATM. The attitude of Bartimaeus is recalls the leper's humility when he said

to Jesus, “If you wish, you can make me clean.”[17] Both men are saying to Jesus, “Your will not mine, be done.” **How many times do we just expect Jesus to do for us whatever we ask of Him?**

Why does Jesus grant the blind man’s wish? First, it’s important to note that Jesus is not a genie. He does not grant his request just because Bartimaeus asked him to, but because the blind man’s faith is true. We too must have faith if we are to ask of something to Christ. “The signs worked by Jesus attest that the Father has sent him. They invite belief in him. To those who turn to him in faith, he grants what they ask. So miracles strengthen faith in the One who does his Father’s works; they bear witness that he is the Son of God. But his miracles can also be occasions for ‘offense’; they are not intended to satisfy people’s curiosity or desire for magic. Despite his evident miracles some people reject Jesus; he is even accused of acting by the power of the demons.[18]

Why was curing Bartimaeus, a blind person, so important?

There are many levels at which we look at this situation. 2,000 years ago, there was no medical technology that could cure blindness; only God had that power, similar to His power to cure the lepers. Because a cure was not available then, and in fact, today’s scientist are still unwrapping the mystery of blindness, the fact that Jesus *could* and did cure him lends evidence for all to see that He is God. Second, “The cure of the blind men is probably symbolic of what will happen to the disciples, now blind to the meaning of Jesus’ passion and to the necessity of their sharing his suffering. As the men are given sight, so, after the resurrection, will the disciples come to see that to which they are now blind.”[19] Lastly, on an individual level for today: “We are the ones who have to go to Jesus. Our eyes have been blind...This is why our most lovable Savior and Healer of souls has descended from on high.”[20]

Does Jesus hear our prayers? Yes, He hears our prayers whether they are said out loud like the blind man or in the silence like the paralytic or the woman with the hemorrhages. “Healing infirmities or forgiving sins, Jesus always responds to a prayer offered in faith...”[21] “When we ask for anything in prayer, we should be ready, always to accept God’s will, even if it does not coincide with our own: ‘His Majesty knows best what is suitable for us; it is not for us to advise him what to give us, for he can rightly reply that we know not what we ask’.”[22]

VIDEO – Benedict XVI: Prayer is the lifeblood of faith – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 1:28

http://youtu.be/f1tq_t3gwD4

The Holy Father explains the need for a prayerful dialogue with God in our daily lives. We need to be like the blind man today and come to Jesus when He calls us, listen to Him, answer Him with truth and humility, and be willing to do whatever it takes to follow Him.

What does the story of Blind Bartimaeus mean to me today?

Like he asked Bartimaeus, Jesus asks us today “What do you want me to do for you?” We should all want what the Blind man wanted: our vision. For most of us, we’re not talking about physical sight, but the ability to *see* Jesus. When we put our own selves back into the story of Blind Bartimaeus, we can follow Bartimaeus’ actions to grow closer to Christ. “But let us go back to the scene outside Jericho. It is now to you that Christ is speaking. He asks you, ‘What do you want me to do for you?’ ‘Master, let me receive my sight,’ Then Jesus answers, ‘Go your way. Your faith has made you well.’ And immediately he received his sight and followed him on his way.’ Following Jesus on his way. You have understood what our Lord was asking from you and you have decided to accompany him on his way. You are trying to walk in his footsteps, to clothe yourself in Christ’s clothing, to be Christ himself: well, your faith, your faith in the light of our Lord is giving you, must be both operative and full of sacrifice. Don’t fool yourself. Don’t think you are going to find new ways. The faith he demands of us is as I have said. We must keep in step with him, working generously and at the same time uprooting and getting rid of everything that gets in the way.”[23]

How can we better “see” God in our life? Saint Francis of Assisi told his followers to look for the activity of the Holy Spirit each day. Saint Ignatius gives the following exercise in the fourth part of his *Examen*: Examine how you have been living this day. Recalling the events of your day, explore the context of your actions. Review the day, hour by hour, searching for the internal events of your life. Look through the hours to see your interaction with what was before you. Ask what you were involved in and who you were with, and review your hopes and hesitations.

What moved you to act the way you did? What was God trying to tell you through the events and the people you encountered today? One simple way to begin to “see” God is to