

2021 October 24

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings:

First: Jeremiah 31.7-9, "Save, O Lord, your people, the remnant of Israel" (7b)

The Psalm: 126, "Restore our fortunes, O Lord." (4a)

Second: Hebrew 5.1-6. "Christ did not glorify himself in becoming the high priest. (5a)

The Gospel: Mark 10.46-52, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" (47b)

Humble Supplications

The psalmist's exuberant cry, "*The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy!*" (Psalm 126.3), resonate in all the scripture lessons today. Three of these lessons give examples of humble supplications to the Lord, and the abundance of the Lord's mercy to mankind. Jeremiah prophesies God's gathering of his people from the ends of the earth and bringing them to their homeland, a great and immediate consolation to the exiled people of Israel. It has also an eschatological meaning, that is, gathering of all God's people, the new Israel, into the kingdom at the end times. The psalmist is praying for the restoration that Jeremiah proclaims today.

Prophecies in the old testament times had an immediate meaning, and have a futuristic one, some with effects down the course of history. The futuristic fulfillment of the prophesy of Jeremiah is reflected in the gospel event where Jesus gives sight to a blind man. The humility and dependence on God manifested by all the people involved in these biblical passages are commendable and are the right attitude toward God. We come across umpteen times in the scripture the abundance of God's mercy and love at the sight of humble supplications of the people. Look at the repeated cry of the blind man in the gospel, "*Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.*" (Mark 10.47b, 48b) The response of Jesus was spontaneous, quick and immensely rich for the supplicant.

The other aspect of these prayers and supplications was the strong faith and reliance of the involved people in the mighty power of God to do for them what they were praying for. Bartimaeus is an excellent example of faith and trust in Jesus, in God. He had also the determination to get what he wanted. His prayer did not originate from greed or any improper desire, but from a real need. That is one characteristic God looks into in our prayers, that is, what we pray to God, is it for a real need, which God alone can satisfy, or is it out of our greed we make the prayer, to which God normally does not respond.

For our prayers to be heard we must know who we are before God, who God is for us, what exactly we are praying for and what we are going to do with the grant of our prayer. The blind man knew all these. Immediately after he regained his sight, he decided to follow Jesus on his way. Every gift or bounty from God is given for a purpose. The faster we recognize God's purpose the better we behave and respond to God's benevolence. God's walking with us and our walking with him depend on our recognition of this purpose. Walking with God is peace, joy and happiness. Blessings received from God should prompt us to join Prophet Jeremiah '*to sing aloud with gladness, raise shouts for God's people, proclaim, give praise, and say, Save, O Lord, your people, the remnant of Israel*' (Jeremiah 31.7)

Fr. George