

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time October 24, 2021

Our Lady of Perpetual Help

First Reading: Jeremiah 31:7-9

⁷ For thus says the LORD: "Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, 'The LORD has saved his people, the remnant of Israel.'"⁸ Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her who is in travail, together; a great company, they shall return here.⁹ With weeping they shall come, and with consolations I will lead them back, I will make them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path in which they shall not stumble; for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first-born.

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

R. (3) The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.

When the LORD brought back the captives of Zion, we were like men dreaming. Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with rejoicing.

R. The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.

Then they said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them." The LORD has done great things for us; we are glad indeed.

R. The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.

Restore our fortunes, O LORD, like the torrents in the southern desert. Those that sow in tears shall reap rejoicing.

R. The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.

Although they go forth weeping, carrying the seed to be sown, They shall come back rejoicing, carrying their sheaves.

R. The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.

Second Reading: Hebrews 5:1-6

¹ For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. ² He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward since he himself is beset with weakness. ³ Because of this he is bound to offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. ⁴ And one does not take the honor upon himself, but he is called by God, just as Aaron was. ⁵ So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, "Thou art my

Son, today I have begotten thee"; ⁶ as he says also in another place, "Thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek."

Gospel: Mark 10:46-52

⁴⁶ And they came to Jericho; and as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great multitude, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside. ⁴⁷ And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁸ And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁹ And Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart; rise, he is calling you." ⁵⁰ And throwing off his mantle he sprang up and came to Jesus. ⁵¹ And Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" And the blind man said to him, "Master, let me receive my sight." ⁵² And Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight and followed him on the way.

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INVITATION TO PRAY

Pause for a few moments of silence and enter more deeply into the presence of God...

Proclaim the Scriptures out loud

As you listen to the scriptures be attentive to a word, a phrase, a question, an image, or a feeling that emerges. Reflect on this quietly or share it aloud.

INVITATION TO REFLECT

This story of Jesus' encounter with Bartimaeus is a favorite of children and should also be one of the favorites of adults. When our oldest son was about three years old, we had been reading Bible story books to him regularly. He was more familiar with the story of blind Bartimaeus than we realized. At a room packed family reunion he had a profusely runny nose. After urgently calling to his mom for a tissue several times without getting her attention he proclaimed, "Mommy, have mercy on me, my nose is running!" He had learned the lesson well, that a cry for mercy did not go unheeded with Jesus, and he expected that it would not go unheeded with his mom either. But as adults we are more like the multitudes that followed Jesus than like Bartimaeus. He was physically blind, knew it, and knew that only God's mercy would be able to meet his need. The multitude was equally blind in a spiritual sense as they so clearly demonstrate later in Jesus' life and ministry by turning their back on him and consenting to his crucifixion. But they were oblivious to who Jesus was and unaware of their spiritual blindness, not knowing their condition, and not humble and needy enough to plead for mercy. Similarly, we often stumble our way through life not recognizing our own blindness. Jesus' response to Bartimaeus should give us great hope. Jesus stands out in great contrast to the many who surrounded him and blind Bartimaeus. They all heard Bartimaeus' cry but from many the response was a verbal rebuke to be silent and not disturb Jesus, or them, with his pitiful condition. Jesus on the other hand not only heard Bartimaeus with his ears but he also heard him with his heart. Jesus always hears us. Always! Jesus always will hear the lone voice in the crowd crying out for help. No doubt in all of his years of blindness, Bartimaeus had spent much time contemplating his condition. I doubt if he ever really expected to be healed of his blindness, but when Jesus passed by, he must have realized that this person was different. His call for mercy this time was not the ordinary beggars cry for spare coins, but genuine awareness that this "prophet" was purported to really heal people. So out of his need he called out in faith and hope, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" And we know the rest of the story. Jesus is still asking us, "What do you want me to do for you?" In John's gospel he says, "Ask and you shall receive that your joy may be complete." Do we believe that Jesus really wants us to ask? Do we believe that he really cares enough to answer? Do we care enough, to ask for the proper things and avoid the mistake of which James speaks, asking and not receiving "because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions." (James 4:3) I must confess it is easy to lose sight, if you will pardon the pun, of who Jesus is and of who we are in him. It is easy to lose sight of the privilege we have to bring our needs to him. And as Francis de Sales explains in his Introduction to the Devout Life, Jesus is always present to hear our cry: "Although faith assures us of his presence, yet because we do not see him with our eyes we often forget about him and behave as if God were far distant from us. We really know that he is present in all things, but because we do not reflect on that fact we act as if we did not know it. This is why before praying we must always arouse our soul to explicit thought and consideration of God's presence... Therefore, when you prepare to pray you must say with your whole heart and in your heart, 'O my heart, my heart, God is truly here!'"¹

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INVITATION TO GROUP SHARING

First Reading

1. What can we learn from God's dealing with Israel about the nature of God?

Second Reading

2. Why do you think God has such intense concern for the poor and needy of the world?
3. How does this passage in Hebrews describe a priest's primary role?

Gospel Reading

4. Besides physical blindness what signs of blindness do you see in society?
5. How do you respond when you see blindness in another?
6. What steps would you recommend for assessing the degree of one's own blindness?
7. How can we cultivate our faith so that our petitions to Jesus are faith based?

INVITATION TO ACT

Determine a specific action (individual or group) that flows from your sharing. When choosing an individual action, determine what you will do and share it with the group. When choosing a group action, determine who will take responsibility for different aspects of the action. These should be your primary considerations.

CLOSING INVITATION TO PRAY

Give thanks to God (aloud or silently) for new insights, for desires awakened, for directions clarified, for the gift of one another's openness and sensitivity. Conclude with a final prayer.