

30th Sunday in Ordinary Time Fr. Ed's Homily
Theme: "JESUS, SON OF DAVID, HAVE PITY ON ME"

The readings of this 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time, especially the first and the Gospel readings, encourage us to be optimistic and confident in the God who created us. He knows us well and loves us unconditionally so that he would never let us down. In the first reading, the prophet Jeremiah foretells the return of God's people from exile in Babylon. Jeremiah never lost trust and faith in God that sometime, somehow, God would bring his people back home to Jerusalem. There would be great joy that day, not only for the healthy ones, but even the weak, lame, and blind would all rejoice because God has fulfilled his promise of bringing them back to Jerusalem. It was a message of hope and comfort for the exiles who needed to know God is still with them even in exile, a foreign land, and will bring them back to their homeland.

In the Gospel reading according to St. Mark, he sees this prophecy of Jeremiah being fulfilled in Jesus Christ. He presents Jesus to the early Christian community and the future Christian communities as the one who will bring salvation to the new Israel, the Church. St. Mark tells us as Jesus was leaving Jericho with his disciples, a large crowd followed them to listen to his teaching or to ask for his divine assistance. Bartimaeus, a blind man, the son of Timaeus, a beggar, was sitting by the roadside. When he heard of Jesus passing by, he cried out loud to him, "Jesus, son of David, have pity on me." We're told the crowd tried to silence him, but he did not stop crying to Jesus to heal him until Jesus heard his cry. Jesus then asked him what he would like him to do for him? He replied to Jesus: "MASTER, I WANT TO SEE." Jesus granted him his request immediately. He seeks Jesus with great effort and persistence, and it paid off. He was healed of his blindness, and he followed Jesus, meaning he became one of Jesus' disciples. By crying to Jesus to heal him, Bartimaeus made a profound profession of his faith in Jesus' power to heal him of his blindness.

Mark presents him as a model of faith to his Christian community. Like Bartimaeus, we must also continue to cry/pray to Jesus until he answers our cry/prayer. Some Biblical scholars are of the view that this story was used in the early Christian church as a model of encouragement and faith to both believers and would-be-believers.

My dear people of God, it is true that the GOODNESS AND MERCY OF GOD FOLLOWS THOSE WHO PUT THEIR TRUST IN HIM. Because Bartimaeus never allowed the crowd to prevent him from reaching out to Jesus, he was healed of his blindness and became a true disciple of Jesus. He was not afraid to throw away his cloak, the only valuable thing he has, to follow Jesus. Are we ready to let go of things in our life that are not necessary to have Jesus in the center of our life? Once Jesus healed him of his blindness, he recognized him as his Savior, hence he became his disciple. Yes, the word of God reminds us, "BUT STRIVE FIRST FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND ALL THESE THINGS WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU AS WELL." - Matthew 6:33. Bartimaeus sought Jesus and gained his sight. He was no longer blind and destitute. Once you have Jesus, you have it all.

Let us also make the cry of Bartimaeus, "Son of David have pity on me, Master I want to see," become our cry/prayer. He suffered from physical blindness, but we know there are other forms of blindness. Spiritual blindness and lack of faith are more serious kinds of blindness than physical blindness. It is said that "THE GREATEST CALAMITY THAT CAN BEFALL PEOPLE IS NOT THAT THEY SHOULD BE BORN BLIND, BUT THAT THEY SHOULD HAVE EYES, YET FAIL TO SEE."

Let us all pray for "eyes of faith" to see Jesus in and around us. Jesus, the High Priest, was a person like us except without sin. He will answer our prayer if we have courage and faith in him. Once we can see Jesus in all God's creation, the world will know we are truly Christians in word and deed. Through us, many people will come to Jesus.

Let us ask Holy Mother Mary and her beloved husband, St. Joseph, to pray to their beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to heal us of our spiritual blindness.

Please do not forget to vote. Early voting in WV started this past Wednesday, October 23. Remember, as a Christian, it is your civic responsibility to vote in an election.

God's blessing to you all.