

Lectionary Faith-Sharing Community

30TH. ORDINARY SUNDAY

Cycle B - October 24, 2021



OPENING PRAYER

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

All: Save us, my God. Hear, Lord, our prayer and listen to our words.

Leader: My soul rests in God, my hope comes from Him. When my anguish multiplies, your consolations rejoice my spirit.

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

Leader: Let us invoke the presence of the Holy Spirit:

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And you shall renew the face of the earth.

Oh God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy his consolations, through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

FIRST READING [Jeremiah 31 (7-9)]

Thus says the Lord:

Shout with joy for Jacob, exult at the head of the nations; proclaim your praise and say: The Lord has delivered his people, the remnant of Israel. Behold, I will bring them back from the land of the north; I will gather them from the ends of the world, with the blind and the lame in their midst, the mothers and those with child; they shall return as an immense throng.

They departed in tears, but I will console them and guide them; I will lead them to brooks of For I am a father to Israel, Ephraim is my first-born.

In the book of Jeremiah we read a series of warnings and claims to the Israelite people because they were allowing themselves to be carried away by political interests to guarantee their survival as a nation in the face of the threat of powers that sought to expand their borders. Rather than putting all their trust in God, the leaders sought to make alliances with other pagan nations. In the end, what the prophet wanted to prevent, happened: The Israelite were attacked and forced to leave their homeland.

In chapters 30 and 31 we notice that the message changes. It is no longer a warning, nor does the prophet use to scold his people after that tragedy. The message that God transmits now, through his prophet, is a message of comfort. And of hope.

God, moved by a love that never fades, is going to intervene in favor of his people, bringing together all those who are scattered. Many times in prophetic texts the messages of future hope are written in the past tense, as if they had already occurred. That gives more strength to the message, and provides an assurance that what the oracle of God transmits will actually happen.

Thus we read in this text that the multitude returns, and that among them the weak and the sick are also present. It is a manifestation of God's love, which leaves no one outside, and on the contrary, favors those who need it most, illustrated in this passage by the women who have just given birth.

("Ephraim is my firstborn" What does it mean? One of the smallest tribes of Israel is that of Ephraim, and by using this expression after saying that "I am a father to Israel" what it means is that the relationship between God and Israel is like that of a father with a child whom he loves very much.)

(1) In this text, what is promised to the lame and the blind? The healing? The solution to their problems? What is it that moves those people in pain to undertake the pilgrimage?

(2) Have you had to live an experience of "exile" (desperate, abandoned)? Did you have the opportunity to find comfort in the Word of God? Didn't you have that grace? Why? Share with the group.

(3) Due to the large number of people in need, help is still needed for the Kingdom of God to manifest for some. What does your parish do to ease the lives of the less fortunate? What are you doing?

SECOND READING [Hebrews 5 (1-6)]

Brothers and sisters:

Every high priest is taken from among men and made their representative before God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to deal patiently with the ignorant and erring, for he himself is beset by weakness and so, for this reason, must make sin offerings for himself as well as for the people.

No one takes this honor upon himself but only when called by God, just as Aaron was. In the same way, it was not Christ who glorified himself in becoming high priest, but rather the one who said to him: You are my son: this day I have begotten you; just as he says in another place: You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

The Letter to the Hebrews continues its presentation of Christ as the true and definitive high priest. Comparing him with the high priests of the temple in Jerusalem shows that he has all the necessary characteristics and at the same time emphasizes his superiority that cannot be compared.

In the same way that the function of the high priest in the temple was understood to be a vocation that came from God himself, the author of this text demonstrates that Christ received the mission from him by a call from God and not on his own initiative. And unlike the previous priests, he does not have to offer sacrifices for his own sins. His offering is far superior, because the priest who offers it is superior, and the victim who sacrifices himself for the forgiveness of sins is superior.

- (1) How do you understand the Christian priesthood? What is the role of the priest?
- (2) We affirm that at the moment of Baptism we are consecrated as Prophets, Priests and Kings. What type of priesthood is that of the baptized faithful? How is this priesthood exercised?
- (3) Can a priest whose life is questionable be still an instrument of divine grace? Why?

GOSPEL [Mark 10 (46-52)]

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.



We found a rich and precious text today. Let us remember that we are in the part of the Gospel of Mark where Jesus is forming his disciples as they go on pilgrimage to Jerusalem where he is going to die. Bartimaeus is blind, without access to a job, and that is why he depends on the alms of the people, since in those times the blind were destined to live as beggars. He is in Jericho, the last stage on the road to Jerusalem and when he finds out that Jesus the Nazarene is passing by, he starts screaming, but does not ask for healing but for compassion. He seems to have understood that he can only trust the goodness and mercy of God. And when Bartimaeus hears Jesus calling him, he throws down the cloak, stands up, and approaches Jesus.

The dialogue between Jesus and Bartimaeus is the key to understanding this story: Jesus only asks. "What do you want me to do for you?", "Master, I want to see" is the answer. And the response of Jesus Christ is, as usual, effective. After the miracle, Bartimaeus follows him on the road. Bartimaeus indicates his desire to live, and at the same time indicates the clarity of his inner eye. He recognizes Jesus as a teacher, he sets out to follow him and

that is what he does. This is being a true disciple: listening, seeing and following. Some disciples of Jesus, even after being with him for a long time, still do not understand him, they do not listen to him.

Bartimaeus can be any of us. Life is truly a path where we meet many people. Sometimes we are on the side of the road, blind, desperate like Bartimaeus, without work, with problems, without help, full of anguish. But if we are in a listening posture, we can "see" Jesus also on the same path beside us. The "seeing" is much more than something physical, it is the ability to open up to the other and recognize his dignity, treating him as another human being, a child of God as we are.

There are many who are waiting for us at the edge of the daily road for us to recognize them, for us to call them, and for us to invite them to come and live. And they will also respond, leaving their cloak of worries and despair, and they will stand up and approach us so that together we cry out to Jesus seeking his compassion and together we will see and follow him on the path of making the Kingdom of God a reality here and now.

- (1) Bartimaeus replied "Master, I want to see." What would you answer Jesus Christ if he asked you what you want?
- (2) Bartimaeus radically changed his life and he became a follower of Jesus Christ. Have you had a similar experience? or Do you know of someone who has experienced such a change?
- (3) Some wanted to silence Bartimaeus. Are there attempts to silence in our society, or even in our Church, people who cry out because of a need?
- (4) What was the major miracle in Bartimaeus, his physical healing, or his spiritual transformation?
- (5) What "blindness" need to be healed in our community?

CLOSING PRAYER

Leader: *Lord of the day and night, of the beginning and of the end: At the closing of this meeting, once again we lift up our hearts to You, divine source of all life.*

All: **We thank you for the gifts you have bestowed on us. We thank you for the love expressed in companionship and understanding, mutual respect and shared ideas. We give you thanks for your holy power that will help us in our concerns that we have shared. For these and all the gifts that come from You, we give you thanks.**

Leader: *Lord hear our prayers* (attendees can propose their own needs of prayer)

All: **In the same way in which we have being blessed by your presence as we meet, we ask now to bless our safe return to our homes. May your holy blessing be over us + in the name of the Father ...**

Leader: *May the King of the eternal glory gather us together in His heavenly banquet. Amen.*

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