

Jesus and Blind Bartimaeus (30th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B)

Jeremiah 31:7-9—The Return of the Blind in the New Exodus

1. Salvation: prophecy about future when God will “save his people” (31:7)
2. Return from Exile: ingathering of the “blind” and “lame” (31:7)
3. New Exodus: God will lead them along a “straight path” (31:9; contrast 1st Exodus)

Psalm 126—The Return from the Babylonian Exile

1. Return to Zion: “the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion” (=Jerusalem) (126:1)
2. Prayer for Restoration: “restore our fortunes, O LORD” (126:4)

Hebrews 5:1-6—A Priest After the Order of Melchizedek

1. High Priest: Jesus can deal “gently with the ignorant and wayward” (5:2)
2. Melchizedek: Jesus is a priest “according to the order of Melchizedek” (5:6)

Mark 10:46-52—Jesus and Blind Bartimaeus

1. Bartimaeus: Aramaic for “son of Timaeus” (10:46)
2. Messiah: “Jesus, *Son of David*, have mercy on me!” (2 X; 10:47, 48)
3. Jesus Calling: “Take heart; rise, he is calling you” (10:49)
4. Question: “What do you want me to do for you?” (10:51)
5. Personal Prayer: “Master (Greek *Rabbouni*), let me receive my sight” (10:51)
 - a. Contrast “Son of David” = Objective office of King
 - b. With “My Rabbi” = Personal affirmation
6. Faith: “Go your way, your faith has made you well” (10:52)
7. Discipleship: he received his sight “and followed him on the way” (10:52)

The Living Tradition

Venerable Bede: Could He who was able to restore sight be ignorant of what the blind man wanted? His reason then for asking is that prayer may be made to Him; He puts the question, to stir up the blind man’s heart to pray... Therefore let us also imitate him, let us not seek for riches, earthly goods, or honours from the Lord, but for that Light, which we alone with the Angels can see, the way to which is *faith*... (Bede, cited in Thomas Aquinas, *Catena Aurea on Mark*, 10:52).

Pope Francis: “*There is an urgent need, then, to see once again that faith is a light, for once the flame of faith dies out, all other lights begin to dim.* The light of faith is unique, since it is capable of illuminating every aspect of human existence. A light this powerful cannot come from ourselves but from a more primordial source: in a word, it must come from God. *Faith is born of an encounter with the living God who calls us and reveals his love...* Transformed by this love, we gain fresh vision, new eyes to see... Faith, received from God as *a supernatural gift*, becomes a light for our way, guiding our journey

through time. It is this light of faith that I would now like to consider, so that it can grow and enlighten the present, becoming a star to brighten the horizon of our journey at a time when mankind is particularly in need of light. (Pope Francis, Encyclical *Lumen Fidei* 4).

Questions for Discussion and Reflection (30th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B)

1. What do you make of Jeremiah’s prophecy of the New Exodus? Is he talking about a geographical return from exile?

2. What is the difference between Bartimaeus identification of Jesus as “Son of David” and “Master” (Greek *Rabbouni*)?

3. Why does “faith” have the power to save and heal? Explain Jesus’ response to Bartimaeus after his healing, with reference to Pope Francis’ first encyclical on the “Light of Faith” (Latin *Lumen Fidei*).

For Further Study

1. Mary Healy. *The Gospel of Mark*. Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008. Pp. 215-18.
2. Edith Barnecut, *Journey with the Fathers: Commentaries on the Sunday Gospels Year B* (Hyde Park: New City Press, 1993), 128-29.