

REFLECTION FOR 30th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME YEAR B

Jeremiah 31:7-9 Hebrews 5:1-6 Mark 10:46-52

On this mission Sunday, we are reminded as Christians of our responsibility to bring people to experience Christ.

So many people have led us to Jesus: parents, grandparents, wife, husband, family, friends, teachers, catechists, sermons, retreats, books, sharing, tv programs. Say thanks to all those people who brought us to Jesus and for their support, nurturing, encouragement, and their good exemplary lives.

At the same time, there are people waiting to hear Jesus' call through us. In our family, our neighborhood, our workplace... How often do we share our faith? How many people even know we are committed Christians?

We too should not fail our children today. We should invest in their spiritual formation, support their faith journey and be a good example to them by the way we live our lives.

The central theme of today's readings is the overflowing mercy, kindness, love, healing, and forgiveness of God.

Today's gospel has a lot to teach us. We see the blind Bartimaeus yearning for God, healing, and liberation.

The blind Bartimaeus is a symbol of all our collective human situations that are constantly yearning for God, for a deeper meaning of life, for healing and liberation from weakness, sickness, poverty, and sin.

We all have our blindness. What is it that imprisons me? Today's gospel challenges each of us to look at ourselves and see what my blindness is.

Our blindness might not necessarily be the physical loss of vision. There is the spiritual blindness of those who do not wish to see any meaning in life, those who have no spiritual values, no spiritual vision.

Our anger, hatred, prejudice, jealousy, evil habits, etc., make us spiritually blind and prevent us from seeing the goodness in our neighbours and God's presence in them.

Our blindness could be whatever that limits and prevents us from reaching or maximizing our potential in life.

Hence, let us pray to have a clear vision of Christian values. A clear spiritual vision enables us to see the goodness in others, to express our appreciation for all that they have been doing for us.

Bartimaeus will not let the opportunity pass him by. So, he cried out for help: *"Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me!"*

When Jesus heard his desperate cry for help, he stopped and called him over. What about us, do we hear the cry of the poor? Do we see the needy who call upon us for help, as a burden?

The way we treat the poor, the sick, the needy, speaks a lot about us. If we see them as a burden, then we make ourselves poor in compassion and poor in love.

People may respect a person who speaks well, but they love a person with helping hand.

Jesus did not treat Bartimaeus like a blind person. Jesus doesn't stop and say to His disciples, look how blind he is, let us go over and pity him. No, what does Jesus do? Jesus said to His disciples, call him. Remember, that is what Jesus does to everybody. He calls us.

Jesus did not focus on Bartimaeus' limitation but on what Bartimaeus can become with the help of God.

We sometimes say to ourselves, I am only a sinner, I am weak, I am not very faithful. We use our limitations and imperfections as an excuse to set low expectations for ourselves and define ourselves by what we think we can't do. Christ refuses to treat you according to your limitations.

Your weakness does not define you. God's strength does.

Your limitation does not define you. God's gifts do.

Your sin does not define you. Christ's love defines who you are now and who you can become.

Face to face now with Jesus, Bartimaeus is asked: "What can I do for you? In answer Bartimaeus said: "Lord, that I may see." His prayer is one we all need to make continually.

The secret of life is to be able to see, to see life's real meaning and direction, to be people of vision, to know where God is to be found, where real truth and goodness and beauty are to be found.

It is interesting to note that Bartimaeus did not believe because he was cured. Rather, he was cured because he believed, and humbly cried out for help. So, seeing his faith, Christ said to him: "*Your faith has cured you.*"

Our God is a God who will not leave us alone when we are sick, hurt, disappointed and in need. As Christians, we never walk alone in life.

In our desperate moments, let us approach Jesus in prayer with trusting Faith, trusting in His goodness, love, mercy, and healing grace, as Bartimaeus did, and offer all our heart's intentions and needs.

There is a simple saying that: "If you are not tired of praying, God is not tired of listening to you."

This story is a summary of the Christian's life and pilgrimage. On our own, we are blind and poor with nothing of our own. As Christians, we have our eyes opened to the meaning of life, we are to undergo a radical conversion experience which gives new direction to all we are and do.

May the Lord touch us with His healing grace, increase our faith, hope and charity. Amen.

Fr Patrick