

Weekend Readings & Reflections

October 23-24, 2021 – Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reflection: Today's Gospel turns on an irony—it is a blind man, Bartimaeus, who becomes the first person outside of the Apostles to recognize Jesus as the Messiah. And his healing is the last miracle Jesus performs before entering the holy city of Jerusalem for His last week on earth. The scene on the road to Jerusalem evokes the joyful procession prophesied by Jeremiah in today's First Reading. In Jesus this prophecy is fulfilled. God, through the Messiah, is delivering His people from exile, bringing them back from the ends of the earth, with the blind and lame in their midst. Jesus, as Bartimaeus proclaims, is the long-awaited Son promised to David (see [2 Samuel 7:12–16](#); [Isaiah 11:9](#); [Jeremiah 23:5](#)). Upon His triumphal arrival in Jerusalem, all will see that the everlasting kingdom of David has come (see [Mark 11:9–10](#)). As we hear in today's Epistle, the Son of David was expected to be the Son of God (see [Psalm 2:7](#)). He was to be a priest-king like Melchizedek (see [Psalm 110:4](#)), who offered bread and wine to God Most High at the dawn of salvation history (see [Genesis 14:18–20](#)). Bartimaeus is a symbol of his people, the captive Zion of whom we sing in today's Psalm. His God has done great things for him. All his life has been sown in tears and weeping. Now, he reaps a new life. Bartimaeus, too, should be a sign for us. How often Christ passes us by—in the person of the poor, in the distressing guise of a troublesome family member or burdensome associate (see [Matthew 25:31–46](#))—and yet we don't see Him. Christ still calls to us through His Church, as Jesus sent His Apostles to call Bartimaeus. Yet how often are we found to be listening instead to the voices of the crowd, not hearing the words of His Church. Today He asks us what He asks Bartimaeus: “What do you want me to do for you?” Rejoicing, let us ask the same thing of Him—what can we do for all that He has done for us?

OPENING PRAYER

Leader: Welcome to our study for the Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time. Let's begin with the Prayer of Bartimaeus:

All: Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me! Son of David, have pity on me! Master, let me receive my sight. Amen.

Leader: God is constantly revealing Himself to us, which is why He took on human flesh so that we could behold His face. Our sin often distorts our ability to see His action in our lives, however. Therefore, we ought to recognize our sin, be repentant for it, and frequent the Sacrament of Confession, if we want to be truly united with God. When we choose sin, our ability to judge between right and wrong is diminished. Sin leads to more sin, so that it becomes a vice, which is a habit of sin that eventually no longer disturbs our consciences. We rationalize our sin to the point that we become blind to it. Not only does sin make us blind to the evil in our life, but it also makes us blind to the true good. In other words, we become blind to the words of the Scriptures, in which God is calling us to return to him. In our society, it is all too easy to grow up believing not only that our sin doesn't hurt anybody else or have any real effect, but also that our own perspective of reality is perfectly legitimate. This relativistic mindset is pervasive in society, which makes it even more difficult to see the destructive power of sin. As we watch this video by Jules Miles, reflect on your own life, asking the Holy Spirit to show you how sin may have blinded you and distorted your perception of reality.

The Sacraments of Healing

Two of the seven sacraments are called the “Sacraments of Healing”: Penance and Anointing of the Sick. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches that, “The Lord Jesus Christ, physician of our souls and bodies, who forgave the sins of the paralytic and restored him to bodily health, has willed that his Church continue, in the power of the Holy Spirit, his work of healing and salvation, even among her own members. This is the purpose of the two sacraments of healing: the sacrament of Penance and the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick” (art. 1421). If we are truly seeking healing and desire to be united with God, we must seek him in the sacraments that he entrusted to the Church. Jesus is waiting to meet us in these sacraments to help us continue on his way of healing, wholeness, and ultimately perfection in the Beatific Vision.

(Play the video on [FORMED.org](#) - [Opening the Word – 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time \(Year B\)](#))

Leader: Serve fearlessly this week. If you feel called to be part of a ministry at Church, take the leap of faith and volunteer. Find a way each day to serve your family or a co-worker. Do not be afraid of the demands of service, for it is when we give ourselves fully in sacrifice that we are most closely united with Jesus's Passion.

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 water, on a level road, so that none shall stumble. For I am a father to Israel, Ephraim is my first-born.

The prophet Jeremiah was born around 650 BC. He began to prophesy during the reign of King Josiah, who did many things to help Israel follow God's law. The Israelite kings who reigned after Josiah, however, didn't uphold God's law. During their reigns Jeremiah warned that God would punish the nation for its sins. Like Isaiah, Jeremiah prophesied that the Babylonian invasion of Jerusalem was God's punishment upon the Israelites. Jeremiah also prophesied that after this terrible event occurred, God would bring his scattered people safely back to their land.

- *Imagine yourself being present, what do you think it would have been like to hear these words from Jeremiah?*
- *How did a time you felt lonely or neglected affect your relationship with God?*
- *How and where is God leading you?*
- *Who is with you on your spiritual journey?*



SECOND READING ~ 2 Hebrews 4:14-16 ~

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*.

In order to assume the responsibilities of high priest, a person must be called by God and able to empathize with the fragility of those he serves. Jesus, of course, was called and anointed by God. Because He was fully human, he was able to empathize with the weaknesses and sufferings of others.

- *How would you relate the coming of Christ with the office of high priest?*
- *What things are dominating your attention and thought today? How can you bring these to Sunday worship and give them to Jesus, our high priest?*

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.

In most of the stories in Mark's Gospel Jesus can only heal those who have faith. Bartimaeus' faith is strong: he calls out in spite of the crowd's attempt to silence him, and when Jesus summons him, he rushes forward. He even throws aside his cloak, which he probably placed in front of him to collect money while begging. Though blind, Bartimaeus sees that his life is about to change. The healing of Bartimaeus is the last thing that happens during Jesus' journey to Jerusalem. Jesus will next enter the city in which he'll be killed. During his journey Jesus repeatedly told his disciples that he would suffer and die. The disciples don't understand or can't accept that Jesus will suffer. They don't yet see who Jesus is. Despite his physical blindness, Bartimaeus sees Jesus more clearly than they do. He even chooses to follow Jesus to the place of suffering and death.

- Jesus tells Bartimaeus to "go your way" – what do you think He meant by that? How is Bartimaeus a model of faith for you?
- How is your faith saving you?
- How do you respond when good things happen to you? What are you thankful for today?
- What personal weakness can God take over for you today?



30TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

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. - Mk 10:51-52

MEDITATION

Have you ever encountered a once in a life-time opportunity you knew you could not pass up? Such a moment came for a blind and destitute man, named Bartimaeus. He was determined to get near the one person who could meet his need. He knew who Jesus was and had heard of His fame for healing, but until now had no opportunity of making direct contact with the *Son of David*, a clear reference and title for the Messiah.

It took a lot of "guts" (courage) and persistence for Bartimaeus to get the attention of Jesus over the din of a noisy throng who crowded around Jesus as he made His way out of town. Why was the crowd annoyed with the blind man's persistent shouts? He was disturbing their peace and interrupting Jesus' discourse. It was common for a rabbi to teach as he walked with others. Jesus was on His way to celebrate the Passover in Jerusalem and a band of pilgrims followed Him. When the crowd tried to silence the blind man he overpowered them with his emotional outburst and thus caught the attention of Jesus.

This incident reveals something important about how God interacts with us. The blind man was determined to get Jesus' attention and he was persistent in the face of opposition. Jesus could have ignored or rebuffed him because he was disturbing his conversation and his audience. Jesus showed that acting was more important than talking. This man was in desperate need and Jesus was ready to respond to his need, not only to empathize with his suffering, but to relieve it as well. A great speaker can command attention and respect, but a man or woman with a helping hand and a big heart is loved more.

Why did Jesus put a question to Bartimaeus - "What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus wanted to draw out of him a personal response of faith and trust in his power to heal and make whole. Jesus commends Bartimaeus for recognizing who he is with the *eyes of faith* and grants him physical sight as well. Ask the Lord Jesus to strengthen your faith that you may draw near to Him and receive His grace and mercy.

- *What do you want Jesus to do for you?*
- *Do you recognize the Lord Jesus with "eyes of faith" as your merciful Lord and healer?*
- *What does this meditation and the readings for this weekend remind you of in your life at this particular moment?*

CLOSING PRAYER

Leader: In closing, let us pray ...

ALL: Lord Jesus, may I never fail to recognize my need for your grace and mercy. Strengthen my faith and trust in you that I may seek your presence daily and listen to your word with a readiness to follow you who are my All. Amen.

Leader: (if time, let us offer up our intercessions ... St. Michael... Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory Be...)

[Opening reflection was shared from St. Paul Center at <https://stpaulcenter.com/studies-tools/sunday-bible-reflections>]

[video can be found at FORMED.ORG "Opening the Word". Additional reflections can be found at FORMED in "Opening the Word"]

[Today's readings come from the New American Bible, Revised Edition (NABRE) and were copied from the USCCB website: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/index.cfm>]

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