

30<sup>th</sup> Sunday per Annum - B  
Jeremiah 31:7-9;  
Hebrews 5:1-6;  
Mark 10:46- 52  
Little Flower - 10/24/21

My Brothers and Sisters,

The Letter to the Hebrews focuses on Jesus as High Priest. Last Sunday's reading from Hebrews reminded us that Jesus is able to sympathize with our weaknesses because he has been tested or tempted in every way that we have but without sin. In today's reading, we are told that Jesus can also deal patiently with human weakness because he himself was beset by ordinary human limitations and weaknesses.

According to Hebrews, *"Every high priest is taken from among men and made their representative before God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins."* As the one High Priest of the new and eternal covenant, Jesus is the mediator between God and us. If the primary effect of sin is alienation, this means that Jesus reconciles us with God and, therefore, with others, the world, and ourselves. Jesus is the one who tears down the walls, the barriers, that separate us from God. Jesus is the one who builds the bridges between God, others, the world, and us. Jesus is the healer of our brokenness and our woundedness.

By our baptism, we share in the priesthood of Jesus. We share in the priesthood of Jesus every time we celebrate Eucharist. However, like Christ, we are called to be reconcilers, healers, bridge builders. We are called to actively work to tear down the walls and barriers that separate us from God and others. We are called to work to unite people. This has never been more necessary than today with all the divisions within families, the Church, and the world. The best prescription for this is to live the Prayer of St. Francis.

In today's Gospel, Jesus works a miracle of healing when he cures blind Bartimaeus. Remember that Jesus' miracles were not random acts of kindness. They fulfilled the prophecies of the coming of the kingdom of God. Therefore, they proclaimed the coming of the kingdom of God in Jesus. Two qualities we notice in most of the miracles of Jesus. First, someone, either the person needing the miracle or someone else, requested Jesus to work the miracle, and, second, Jesus asked for a sign or even a profession of faith. In today's Gospel, Bartimaeus made a profession of faith by asking Jesus to heal him.

However, today's Gospel is also a metaphor for spiritual blindness. In other words, Bartimaeus could equally have been asking Jesus to cure his spiritual blindness. Once Jesus cured his spiritual blindness as well as his physical blindness, he followed Jesus. When I was at St. Malachy parish, Sr. Edward Ann always talked to the 2<sup>nd</sup> graders about the necessity of seeing with eyes of faith and not just with our physical eyes. I would suggest we all suffer from spiritual blindness to some extent.

For example, as we all know, today many Catholics do not believe in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist or in the importance of Sunday Mass. If we do not recognize Jesus' Real Presence in the Eucharist or do not see the importance of Sunday Mass, we are not seeing with eyes of faith, and we are spiritually blind. Likewise, if we are not following Jesus by living the values he taught and lived, we are spiritually blind. With Bartimaeus, we need to pray to Jesus, *"Master, I want to see."* When we see with eyes of faith, we have a very different perspective on what is beautiful, what is true, and what is good.

My brothers and sisters, today is Mission Sunday. In his message for World Mission Day 2021, Pope Francis wrote, "The theme of this year's World Mission Day – 'We cannot but speak about what we have seen and heard' (Acts 4:20), is a summons to each of us to 'own' and to bring to others what we bear in our hearts." As today's reading from Jeremiah suggests, the goal is to bring all peoples to God, to Christ, by bringing Christ to them by our words and by our actions. Today we are called to be the hands and feet of Jesus in our world.