

Jer: 31:7-9; Heb: 5:1-6; Mark 10:46-52

Oct 28 Sunday 9 AM and 11 AM Masses. Fr. Abraham

One sculptor was cutting the image of Jesus from a large block of stone in his studio. One day when the face of Jesus was just becoming recognizable out of the stone, a young girl was visiting the studio with her parents. She looked at the half done face of Jesus, her eyes registering wonder and astonishment. She stared at the piece for a moment, she ran to the sculptor.

“Is that Jesus?” She asked.

“Yes”

“Well,” said the little girl, “how in the world did you know he was inside.”

A 92-year-old man, who was fully dressed each morning by eight o'clock with hair fashionably combed and face perfectly shaven, even though legally blind, moved to a nursing home. His wife of 70 years passed away recently, making the move necessary. After many hours of waiting patiently in the lobby of the nursing home, he smiled sweetly when told his room was ready. As he maneuvered his walker to the elevator, the nurse provided a visual description of his tiny room. “I love it,” he stated with the enthusiasm of an eight-year old having just been presented with a new puppy. “But Mr. Jones, you haven't seen the room; just wait.” “That doesn't have anything to do with it,” he replied. “Happiness is something you decide on ahead of time. Whether I like my room or not doesn't depend on how the furniture is arranged ... it's how I arrange my mind. I already decided to love it. It's a decision I make every morning when I wake up. I have a choice; I can spend the day in bed recounting the difficulty I have with the parts of my body that no longer work or I can get out of bed and be thankful for the parts that do work. “Each day,” he continued, “is a gift, and as long as my eyes open, I'll focus on the new day and all the happy memories I've stored away...just for this time in my life. Old age, you see, is like a bank account. You withdraw from what you've put in.”

Today's Gospel, the healing of the blind man, Bartimaeus, challenges us to see Jesus as the Son of God, the healer, and he invites us to gain true spiritual vision. The central theme of today's readings is the overflowing mercy and kindness of a loving and forgiving God for His people. The first reading tells us how a forgiving and compassionate God healed the spiritual blindness of His Chosen People by subjecting them to captivity in Babylon and then liberated them, bringing them back to their homeland. Today's second reading, taken from the letter to the Hebrews, presents Jesus as the perfect sacrifice for sins and as the great High Priest. It identifies Jesus as the true High Priest of the New Testament. It also gives us the assurance that, as the High Priest, Jesus is sympathetic to us because He has shared our human nature.

Each person has to be aware of his gifts and charisms or given talents and he/she has to utilize them in its fullness and God will give you fullness of charisms and gifts. The blind Bartimaeus, a beggar was sitting at road side and when he came to know that Jesus was going the way he began to shout out loudly “Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me”. Many people sternly ordered him to be quiet. But he all the more cried out, even more loudly. The blind man had the capacity to speak, though he was not given the gift

of seeing. Had he not used his capacity to shout respecting the people's order, Jesus would not have noticed his presence and hear his request and might have passed through that way. But he utilized his given gift in its maximum ignoring the order of the people and he received the gift of seeing from Jesus who heard him shouting and asked him what actually he wanted.

The reply that the blind man at Jericho received is that "Jesus is passing through". Jesus is passing through nearby. Recognize the presence of Jesus who is going your way requires deliberate efforts from your part. The salvation will come to you and to your home (Luke 19: 10).

The weakness of the blind man that is his blindness enabled him to meet Jesus on the way. The weakness of Zacchaeus (he was short in stature) persuaded him to climb on the tree and eventually enabled him to encounter Jesus. The so called 'weaknesses' of which you frequently lament are not your weaknesses but your strength since they help you to meet Jesus on your journey of life. Seeing differently is the beginning of growth in discipleship. Guru (Sanskrit word for teacher who leads someone to God.) is the one who see with inner eye. Guru is the one who enkindles the inner eye. When Jesus touched first, the blind man saw people like trees. When he touched the second time, he saw clearly.

The bad thief is asking to Jesus, "Save me so that I can keep on stealing for the next coming fifty plus years"! Whereas the good thief saw differently, 'He saw eternity'. "Lord", he said, "Allow me to be with you in the Paradise". Jobs' wife is cursing Job; that is World's vision. Job's own attitude: "God has given, God has taken; let his name be glorified". This is God's vision.

This Gospel episode is a summary of the Christian's life and pilgrimage. While physical sight is desirable, spiritual sight is an absolute necessity for our salvation. In order to have this spiritual sight we must pray to Jesus and say Lord, my Teacher, let me see again. Only when we receive spiritual sight, we will come to know and understand that "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." As Christians, we must have our eyes opened to the meaning of life, if we are to undergo a radical conversion experience which gives new direction to all we are and what we do. Barthimeus believed in the word of God which was revealed to him internally that this man was the Son of God and he was healed. Let us pray that today's Word of God will touch the heart of those who have been spiritually blind so they will find the strength in Christ to walk away from what destroys the life. Let us also pray this week for the grace of God to shine on those in need so their eyes may be opened and remain opened to the faith in Jesus the Son of God.