

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time B/2012

The readings of this Sunday talk about God's consolation and healing. They show that whatever might be their suffering, God is capable of bringing peace and joy to his people. They invite us also to entrust our life to God, especially when we are in difficult times.

In the first reading, the prophet Jeremiah prophesies the end of Israel's exile from Babylon and the joy of the return to their country. He describes the joyful atmosphere that will reign in the land as the people will enjoy freedom and deliverance. At that time, all will shout with joy and proclaim the praise of the Lord. God will gather the remnant of Israel from all over the world and bring them back. Though they departed in tears, they will return home in joy and the assurance from the Lord.

What is behind this text is the idea that God is the helper of his people. In the desperate moments of their life, he never abandons them, but rather comes always to their rescue. Therefore, the people of God have to rejoice and know that God will console them and heal their wounds.

This text helps us understand the stakes of today's Gospel as Jesus heals a blind man alongside the road of Jericho. First of all, the Gospel says that, as Jesus was leaving the town of Jericho with his disciples and a considerable crowd, a blind man who heard about him cried out so that he has pity on him. When people tried to rebuke him, he cried louder to the point that Jesus stopped and addressed him. Eventually, Jesus healed him and he followed them.

What do we learn from this Gospel? The first thing is about the audacity of taking a chance. One of the striking points in this Gospel is the determination and the persistence of the blind man. In fact, when the blind man heard the crowd passing, he inquired about what was going on. Once he knew that it was Jesus, he wanted to address him and let him know the deep desire he has in his heart for the healing of his eyes. As he wanted, so he received Jesus' healing intervention.

All that happened to the blind man, thanks to his perseverance and persistence. What it teaches us is that as long as we are not discouraged, despite the obstacles we encounter in our undertakings, we will receive what we want. The policy of giving up on our projects at the least of the difficulties we meet is the worst enemy of our life and our faith.

In fact, in spite of the efforts of the crowd to silence him, the blind man knew that this was his only chance to approach Jesus and to obtain the healing he was longing for so long. That is why he kept calling on Jesus to have mercy on him. In turn, Jesus encouraged him to come forward, to brave the opinion of those who were pulling him down and to receive the healing he wanted so much.

What this episode teaches us is that life offers us countless opportunities. But, when one comes our way, we have to take it and not let it go away. The truth is that the opportunity we lose today, we never know if we will have it again tomorrow. We better take what comes our way, especially when it is about our salvation.

When we do not seize a moment to act, the chance might be gone forever without the possibility of coming back again. It means also that when we delay what we can do for

today and push for tomorrow, we may lose a precious chance to act and correct what is imminent and possible. Instead of waiting for another time, we better do it now. That is what the blind man has done. He did not want to let Jesus pass without taking his chance to ask him for healing.

The second thing I want to highlight is about the joy of breaking the chain of dependence. What do I mean by that? In fact, imagine the life of this blind man and the turmoil surrounding his life. As blind, he was reduced to begging in order to survive. As man, he was dependent on the good will and the generosity of those who could listen to him and give him something.

As it can happen in such conditions with many disabled persons, the blind man was dependent on others and on their good will. But, such situation, far from being desirable, is really detrimental to the self-esteem of a person and to his life. Of course, he was not responsible for what his life was, but nevertheless he was affected by it. That is why he wanted to heal.

When Jesus healed him, he gave him the chance to be independent and to regain his dignity as a human being. By this healing, he became a free man who could decide by himself where to go as it pleases him and what to do with his as he wants. The healing for him was really the breaking of the dependence and the recovery of the freedom.

As far as he did not encounter Jesus, he was dependent and a prisoner. Once he met Jesus and received the healing, he became another person. That is the main reason why Jesus has come into the world, namely to set us free from the dependence we have created in our lives.

But for that to happen, we have to cry out to Jesus and ask him to heal us. If we do not do anything and if we hide ourselves from him, we will stay with our infirmities and dependencies. Faith means here the courage to call upon Jesus for healing and for freedom. That is why Jesus tells the blind man that his faith has saved him, which means literally, the courage to open to him and to desire to be healed.

As we hear these words, let us turn to Jesus and cry out like the blind man: “Jesus, son of David, have pity on me”. Let us bring our dependencies and blindness of heart to him so that he may heal us. Let us not hesitate to ask him to heal us physically and spiritually. May God bless you all!

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



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