

## Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time B2021

The readings of this Sunday talk about divine healing. They show how God delivers those who call out to him in their distress. They invite us to take advantage of any opportunity coming our way and ask for healing from God.

The first reading describes the prophecy of Jeremiah about the end of Israel's exile. It announces the joyful news that will reign in the country as Israel will be free and delivered. It also highlights God's promise of gathering the remnant of the children of Israel from all over the world where they had been scattered.

What is behind this text is the idea that God is the deliverer of his people. There is also the idea that thanks to God, the fate of any suffering people can change. The last idea is related to the truth that whatever might be the suffering of his people, God will never abandon them.

This text allows us to understand today's Gospel as Jesus heals the blind Bartimaeus. First of all, the Gospel says that as Jesus was leaving the town of Jericho with his disciples and the crowd, a blind man named Bartimaeus was begging by the roadside.

It also says that as he heard that Jesus was passing by, he cried out to him for healing. Then, it reports on the attempt of people to silence him while by keeping calling on him, Jesus ended up stopping and listening to his request. Finally, the Gospel reports his healing and Jesus' declaration that his faith has saved him and his following of Jesus.

What do we learn from this Gospel? Today I want to talk about the healing of sight. What do I mean by that? Before everything, let me tell you a story I saw on YouTube. There was a blind man begging along the road. He had a tablet on which it was written: "I am blind and cannot see; please help me". In response, people were putting some money in the box he had with him.

A young lady passing by saw what was written. She took the tablet from the hands of the man, erased the written words and wrote: "This is a beautiful day, but I cannot see it, because I am blind". When the bypassing saw that, they were so touched that they gave more money than he had received before.

The blind man was wondering what the young lady really wrote to the point that people suddenly were so generous. When evening came, the young lady stopped by again. The blind man, sensing her movement and touching her feet, realized that it was the same lady of the morning. Then, he asked her what she did. The lady told him that she changed the words written on the tablet. At that time, the blind man understood that, "if you change your words, you change your world".

Why am I telling you this story? I am telling this story, because I want you to go deep into today's Gospel. Bartimaeus is someone who does not miss an opportunity. When he heard Jesus passing by, it was his opportunity of life he wouldn't miss at all. Bartimaeus was also a professional beggar. He knew by experience the words to use in order to bring people to help him. Unfortunately, the help he got from them was too small to end his suffering. He would prefer to be healed than to be eternally a beggar. As he heard Jesus passing by, he changed his words. He just wanted that the son of David may have pity on him. Even when many rebuked him, he kept calling on Jesus. In the end, he got the healing and his world was changed for the best.

Bartimeus is equally a blind who recovered his sight. At this point, the question I ask you is this: "Are you blind or do you see?" Answer this question only after having listened to what follows: There are three types of blindness. First, there is physical blindness. It is characterized by the absence of sight. Perhaps, that is not what you have because your sight is still good. However, we have always to remember that even if we see, we still need to give to our hearts eyes so that we may see what external sight cannot see. As the French writer Antoine de Saint-Exupery writes, "What is essential is invisible to the eye; one sees well only with the heart". It was the interior vision of faith that helped Bartimeus to recover his external vision of things. Thus, Jesus can say, "Your faith has made you well".

Second, there is moral blindness. It is more dangerous than the first. The measure of it is our conscience that helps us distinguish right from wrong. A conscience can grow, develop or die. What keeps the conscience alert is the word of God. If the conscience is dead, then, there is a complete moral blindness. That is the case of criminals who do not see anything wrong with killing. It is also the case with those have no truth, those who feel no guilt, no shame, no regret, no resentment, etc. As physical blindness can endanger our body, so can moral blindness endanger our soul. We have to strive to see not only the trees, but also to distinguish right from wrong.

Third, there is the blindness of unbelief. As physical sight comes through our eyes and moral sight through our conscience, spiritual sight comes through faith. If faith is missing in a person, then, he is in a complete spiritual blindness. If faith is there, it gives us another perspective on the world, on people and events happening to us and around us. We really need faith so that we understand God's mysteries and adjust our relationship to people, the world and to God.

In regard to the danger of this triple blindness, the priest has a role to play: to awaken people to the truth of Jesus. The priest is not an uprooted being or fallen from heaven, but a human being who has behind him a family and a history like everyone else. "Chosen from among men" means that he is made of the same fabric as any other human creature: with emotions, struggles, doubts and weaknesses of everybody else. Scripture sees in this a benefit for other men, not a motive for scandal. In this way, the priest will be more ready to have compassion, as he is also cloaked in weakness. "Chosen from among men", the priest is moreover "appointed to act on behalf of men," that is, given back to them, placed at their service -- a service that affects man's most profound dimension, his eternal destiny.

On this mission Sunday, let us pray for all our priests and the missionaries who toil throughout the world to bring the Good News of Jesus to all the peoples. Today, we have to ask the Lord to heal us by increasing our faith so that we may see what the eyes of our body cannot see and hear what the ears of our body cannot hear. May he give eyes to our hearts so that we come to see his mysteries! May he give us also the grace of his Holy Spirit so that he inspires us with the right words which can help us change the world in us and around us! God bless you all!

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



Homily Date: October 24, 2021  
© 2021 – Fr Felicien I. Mbala, PhD, STD  
Contact: [www.mbala.org](http://www.mbala.org)  
Document Name: 20211024homily.pdf