

THIRTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME B2024

Let me start this homily by telling you the story of Israel. In 588 B. C. Israel was invaded by the Babylonians and the whole country destroyed, including the temple. At the final siege of Jerusalem, the prophet Jeremiah was imprisoned. But, many years later as he was in exile, the prophet received an oracle of hope, namely that God was about to restore the ruins of Jerusalem and let the children of Israel to go home.

What we have as today's first reading is part of that oracle: God will deliver his people and the remnant of the children of Israel, blind, lame, mothers and children, will be set free. From everywhere they were scatted, his people will return to their land. They departed in tears, they will return in jubilation.

Before continuing, let me make a stop on this text. Brothers and sisters, the experience of being in exile is part of everybody's life. We all have broken dreams and unrealized projects. How many of our plans have been distorted! How many of our deepest desires have been unfulfilled to the point of leaving some disappointed, unsatisfied and bitter. We all sense that there is a mystery surrounding us we cannot understand. In the end, it comes to one thing: the experience of life pushes us to long for our real home, to hope for a consolation, to aspire to a time where God takes the matter into his hands and bring us joy.

That legitimate longing for joy and consolation is what was in the heart and the mind of the blind man in today's Gospel. 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 healing at our Lord's intervention.

All that happened to the blind man thanks to his perseverance and persistence. Brothers and sisters, 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.

Let us come back again to the blind man. In spite of the efforts of the crowd to silence him, he knew that his health was at stake. That particular moment 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, our Lord 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.

The blind man teaches us that life offers us countless opportunities. When one comes your way, take it and not let it go away. Brothers and sisters, 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 eternal salvation.

When we do not seize the moment of today to act and change the course of the events, the chance of today might be gone forever without the possibility of coming back again. When we delay what we can do for today and push it 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.

By healing the blind man, our Lord set him free from the chain of dependence. What to do I mean by that? Imagine the life of that 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 a help.

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 our Lord 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 pleased him and what to do with his as he wanted. The healing for him was really the breaking of the dependence and the recovery of the freedom.

As far as he did not encounter our Lord, he was dependent and a prisoner. Once he met him and received the healing, he became another person. That is the main reason why our Lord came 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 our Lord 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 our Lord for healing and for freedom. That is why our Lord 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 our Lord 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 heals us. Let us not hesitate to ask him to heal us physically and spiritually. Let us ask him to heal our nation as we enter this week of election.

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



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