

Homily for October 28, 2018  
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Jesus had to be feeling somewhat exasperated. He must have been wondering what it was going to take for Him to get through to His Apostles. They had been with Him for almost three years and seen all His many signs and listened to all He had said but they still ... just didn't seem to get it. After all they had seen and heard ... as we heard last week ... they were even bickering among themselves about who was going to be greatest or most honored among the disciples. There are none so blind as those who will not see! Oh, these chosen disciples were not *physically* blind and had seen Jesus in action many times ... they were *spiritually* blind as they did not seem to understand who Jesus *really* was or what following him really meant. He knows He does not have much time remaining to teach them ... and as often as He had told them about His impending death ... their blindness had kept them in denial.

Now Jesus has just passed through Jericho ... on His way to what will be His triumphant entry into Jerusalem and ultimately ... His arrest, torture and death. As he reaches the outskirts of the city a blind beggar, Bartimaeus, cries out to Him ... "Jesus, son of David, have pity on me." And the disciples rebuked him ... telling him to be silent. No doubt these were the same disciples ... that we heard about three weeks ago ... when Jesus rebuked *them* ... for trying to prevent the little children from coming to Him. But Bartimaeus would *not* be silenced ... and his persistence was rewarded! Jesus asks what he wanted Him to do and of course he answered ... "Master, I want to see". And Jesus in turn says ... "Go your way; your faith has saved you." Bartimaeus received his sight and followed Jesus.

Throughout the Gospels we hear of many healings and most of the time those healed remain anonymous ... the paraplegic ... the man born blind ... the Syrophenician woman and so forth. But this time it is different. The evangelist tells us exactly who this person is. Why? We are told he received his sight and followed Jesus. Many scripture scholars believe that he is named because he became prominent among the early Christians and was well known to the evangelist.

At any rate, Bartimaeus ... even though he was physically blind ... he was not deaf. He had heard of the wonderful works Jesus had done and now Jesus was within reach. And unlike the spiritually blind disciples ... the Holy Spirit had given Bartimaeus the inner sight ... the eyes of faith ... to recognize who Jesus was! "Jesus, son of David, have pity on me." "Son of David" was a clearly Messianic title, the anointed one ... a title *only* Peter, among all his disciples had ever used ... a *dangerous* title conjuring images of Royalty! And Jesus does *not* correct him! He did not warn him not to tell anyone as he had done repeatedly before in Mark's gospel. Bartimaeus saw, through his inner sight ... through his eyes of faith ... what most of Jesus disciples could not yet see.

Most of us are blessed with physical sight ... a gift, I think, we often take for granted. As a matter of fact we are fairly bombarded with things to see. As we look around us there are things to see

everywhere ... things on TV, on the computer, on the phone. We spend our lives focusing so many things that we often miss that which we need to see. We are like those disciples who have physical sight but often lack that inner sight Bartimaeus had ... to see that which is *really* important. Some are focused on the accumulation of wealth and possessions. Others see only the path to power and influence. Still others see only to seek their own pleasure. Many see only what they want to see but they are blind to the treasures under their very noses ... treasures of family ... of friends and the beauty of God's creation.

I wonder from time to time as I ponder on the areas of *my* inner blindness and muse on whether I really *want* Jesus to open my eyes so that I can see. Do I want Him to heal my blindness so that I truly see the poor and homeless when it is much more convenient to look through them without really seeing ... because if I truly see them must not I actually do something? Do I want Him to give me the sight to truly see the plight of the immigrant and the refugee because if I truly see them am I not called to help? Do I want Him cure my blindness to the way humankind has abused the gift of this planet and its resources, because will I not have to do my part to set things right? Do I want Him to give me the sight to see the racism ... sexism and all the other irrational discrimination that still occurs in our world ... in our country? Do I want Him to open my inner eyes of faith so that I may see any of the many other wrongs and inequities in our society because if I do ... then I will be called to do something ... and I do not know what that something is?

Do we remain in our comfortable blindness and complacency or do we have the courage to tell our Savior that we *too* want to see ... and then ... trust that *when* he cures our blindness ... He will also show us the way ... that He will show us what to do with our new-found sight.