

Homily Notes for Sunday, October 28, 2018, 30th in Ordinary Time

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

1. Summary: The central theme of today's readings is that if we wish to be healed of our spiritual blindness and see clearly the vision of the future that God has for us, we must commit ourselves completely to Him and ask him precisely for what we want.

2. Today's Gospel summarizes the results of the formation in discipleship that our readings have described over the last six weeks. The theme is being delivered from the darkness of sin and enabled to become disciples of Jesus. This is shown in how Jesus healed the blind man, Bartimaeus.

3. Perspectives of the past six weeks' readings: This is the final instruction to us from the series of readings that we have had on discipleship for the past seven weeks. These readings dealt with faith in Jesus, with the seriousness of sin, with the love of money, with the desire for power (2) and with marriage and divorce, and finally with us turning to Jesus for help in overcoming these problems.

24th Then Peter exhibits his vision, at Caesarea Philippi as he declares that Jesus is the Messiah (Mk 8:27-35). Jesus, in response, gives the **first prophecy of his Passion, including the cost of discipleship.**

25th Then, on their final journey to Jerusalem, Jesus touches on five key discipleship themes in these readings. Jesus first gives the second prophecy of his Passion. But the disciples do not understand. Rather they are arguing about who would be greatest. Jesus responds with a call to **humility and servant leadership.**

Three times Jesus predicts his Passion (8:31, 9:30, 10:33), which is a **call to embrace suffering** as Jesus did.

26th He teaches about the **seriousness of sin and the blindness it brings** (Mk 9:38-48). This is a serious call to **holiness and an exemplary life.**

27th He deals with **marriage and divorce** (Mk 10:2-16). We are called on to be models of faithfulness in marriage.

28th We see how the rich young ruler was so righteous but was trapped by the love of money/possessions. This brings up our current problem of **materialism and consumerism, including our stewardship** (Mk 10:17-30). St John Paul II uses this story as a foundation for his Encyclical, "The Splendor of the Truth" which gives guidance for the entire moral life.

29th Again James and John ask for power and political recognition. Jesus responds with a call for **servant leadership** with a reference to the importance of humility (Mk 9:30-37; 10:35-43).

Today's Gospel reading (30th) takes place in Jericho, the last step in Jesus's journey to Jerusalem. Jericho is an ancient city, fifteen miles away from Jerusalem. It was the first city conquered by the Israelites when they entered Palestine. At the time of Jesus, it was a city of great wealth and remarkable beauty, supporting many date palm plantations and fig trees. Great numbers of merchants and Jewish priests made their homes in this pleasant city. Those who could not themselves go to Jerusalem, would often line the roads to Jerusalem to greet the crowds of pilgrims as they passed toward the city. The Jewish rabbis, like Jesus on pilgrimage, often taught religious lessons to the pilgrims on their journey. Beggars also capitalized on the increased traffic through the city to beg for money. One such beggar was the blind man known as Bartimaeus. He heard that Jesus was near and cried out to him to heal his blindness.

4. Can Blindness really be cured? The story of Gemma Di Giorgi. A story from our century mediated by Padre Pio. If physical blindness can be cured, can spiritual blindness also be cured?

5. First reading: Jer 31: 7-9 The connection of this passage to the Gospel is the healing of the blind as God brings his people home. At the spiritual level, it represents spiritual healing from the blindness that comes from sin, from which all of us must be continually delivered. Blindness symbolizes enslavement to sin. This passage indicates that the healing of the blind man by Jesus is one of the proofs that he is the Messiah. To be healed, we must but ask God for this help and commit ourselves totally to Him.

6. The second reading: We want to be disciples of Jesus because our Jesus, our High Priest is superior to all. The reading describes Jesus as the *High Priest* of the new covenant. He is our compassionate and most powerful High Priest. He has the power to answer all our needs. He has the power to save us.

Hence, through Jesus, the true High Priest, we can approach the throne of grace with confidence and boldness, and we can expect mercy and favor from God. For this we are **grateful** and desire to be his **followers (disciples)**. The way of discipleship is the way of salvation. Notice here that the blind man never considered going up to the Temple to be healed by the priests there. Jesus is the one who heals and saves.

7. Jesus spots a particular blind man in the crowd: The story of Bartimaeus is the last healing miracle recorded in the Gospel of Mark. While the majority of those who received healing in the New Testament are not mentioned by name, in this case, the beggar's name is given as Bartimaeus, which means son of Timaeus. He had been waiting a long time for help.

8. His act of faith. Then, when the people told Bartimaeus the news of Jesus' passage through the city, he began to shout his remarkable prayer of faith: "*Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.*" Who would have expected a messianic greeting from a blind beggar? In spite of the crowd's objections, Jesus stopped and, recognizing Bartimaeus' faith, called the blind man to him. Some of the better people in the crowd turned to the blind man and said, "Take heart; rise, he is calling you."

9. To be healed we must let go of everything else and ask Jesus to heal us. In the case of Bartimaeus this is symbolized by him throwing off his cloak and asking Jesus to give him his sight. He then was healed and then *he followed him* as a disciple. In contrast to the rich young ruler of whom we heard in the Gospel two weeks ago who was not free enough of his possessions to follow Jesus, Bartimaeus was able.

10. Great Hope. God wishes to heal each of us personally and individually and to help us as a parish, together, develop a vision of what we can become. God will do this. But we must commit ourselves to Him and ask him specifically for what we need.

11. Let us think about whatever part of our lives need healing. Where in our family is there disorder? Let us ask Jesus to overcome the blindness that has put us in this problem and ask him to heal us. Then we must be willing to do whatever he indicates.

12. There is no situation that cannot be healed. There is no blindness that cannot be overcome. Let us put our lives and the lives of those of our family in order so that the Lord can overcome our blindness, heal us, and give us His vision for our future.

13. I am convinced that the Lord has great things in the future for each of us individually, for our families, and for us as a parish. Let us turn to Him and ask him to heal us and to guide us.

14. Example of the power of overcoming spiritual blindness, the conversion of St. Francis Xavier.
"What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world but loses his soul?"