

The 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year B -10/27/2024 – Msgr. Peter Quang Nguyen

First Reading – Jeremiah 31:7-9: *The LORD promises to bring back the remnant of Israel from the north, comforting and guiding them as a father, ensuring a safe return for all, including the vulnerable.*

Responsorial Psalm – Psalm 126: *The LORD restored Zion's captives, filling us with joy. Nations recognized God's deeds. We pray for renewed fortunes, knowing those who sow in tears will reap in joy, bringing in their harvest.*

Second Reading – Hebrews 5:1-6: *High priests are chosen from among men to offer sacrifices for sins. Christ, called by God, is a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek, not by self-glorification.*

Gospel – Mark 10:46-52: *Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, called out to Jesus for mercy. Despite being told to be quiet, he persisted. Jesus healed him, saying his faith had saved him. Bartimaeus then followed Jesus.*

On this thirtieth Sunday of ordinary time, the church invites us to place our faith and hope in Christ, our high priest. As our high priest and mediator, Christ opens our eyes to see the marvels that He has done for us.

Our first reading this Sunday is from the book of the prophet Jeremiah and our Gospel reading from Mark point to the restoration and healing that God brings to us: a radical articulation of hope, as the basis for liberation and survival. They are experiencing captivity in Babylon as result of their infidelity to God's Covenant of love. The Lord will deliver His people from the bondage of the Babylonians and restore them to their former dignity in the new city of Jerusalem! All those who have suffered will be brought back to the Lord's holy city, Jerusalem, and once again take on the mantle of becoming a light to all the nations. Hence, we find images of restoration and renewal. Exiled, the Israelites were weak and helpless. However, redemption and peace came from God.

The Responsorial Psalm for this Sunday's readings reminds us all of the great and wonderful things that God has done for us and continues to do for us. Our response to the Lord's works is to be a stance of joy!

In our gospel today, Jesus brings healing and restoration to the blind man, Bartimaeus.

Bartimaeus cries out for healing, for the pity and compassion of the Son of David. Jesus hears his cry, and through the voice of a messenger, tells Bartimaeus that Jesus is calling him to "Come forward!" Bartimaeus comes forward in faith and it is this faith that is his salvation. He receives his sight and in praise and thanksgiving, filled with joy, he follows the Lord on the way.

Sometimes you and I are Bartimaeus. We need to see; we want to see. The circumstances of life and the darkness of the world can seem to envelop us and we find it difficult to see the light of Christ. We long for Christ's peace, His joy, His love. We call out in faith for Jesus to have pity on us, to help us to see. The Lord is ready to open our eyes to His presence and His love. Thanks be to God for the messengers in our lives that help us to respond to the Lord.

Maybe they are our parents, family members, friends, co-workers, fellow parishioners who show us the way to Jesus. The love and healing we receive from Jesus we are sent forth to share with others. We can be those messengers who walk with those who struggle to see the Lord present in their lives. We can be the voice that tells those who struggle in faith to “get up, Jesus is calling you.” We can help them to throw off the cloak of sin and sadness so that they, too, can experience the great things the Lord will do for them. We and they can be filled with joy!

Our second reading reminds us of the role of the priest. Every true priest shares in the priesthood of Christ, the high priest. A priest mediates for the people and helps strengthen their faith. *“Every high priest was chosen from among humans...so he can understand and sympathize with those who are ignorant and rejected.”*

Hence, during the anniversary of his episcopal ordination, Saint Augustine wrote: *“I am fearful of what I am for you, but I draw strength from what I am with you. For you, I am a priest, and with you, I am a Christian...Help me by your prayers and obedience to carry out these many serious, and varied duties...”* (Sermon 350, 1).

So, as a human being *“who lives within the limitations of weakness,”* the priest must pray for himself. Most importantly, his community must always pray for him. As Christians, we all need God’s mercy, healing, and liberation from the limitations of life. So, we must constantly turn to Christ, our High Priest, for help.

Today’s gospel has a lot to teach us. We see the blind and poor Bartimaeus yearning for healing and liberation. He will not let this opportunity pass him by. So, like a drowning man, he cried out for help: *“Jesus, Son of David have pity on me!”* The blind Bartimaeus represents our collective human situation that is constantly yearning for healing and liberation from weakness, sickness, poverty, and sin. Our blindness might not necessarily be the physical loss of vision. However, it could be whatever limits and prevents us from reaching or maximizing our potential in life.

To be free from these limitations, first, we must humbly acknowledge that they exist. Second, it is interesting to note that, Bartimaeus did not believe because he was cured. Rather, *he was cured because he believed,* and humbly cried out for help. So, seeing his faith, Christ said to him: *“Your faith has cured you.”*

There is a simple saying: *“If you are not tired of praying, God is not tired of listening to you.”* The good news today is that Christ, our high priest, is always ready to hear, heal, and liberate us from whatever is limiting us in life. He wants us to see again. To see again is to have a living faith in Christ, our high priest who mediates for us before the Father.