

October 28, 2018

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

Reflection on the Mass:

After the entrance procession comes to the sanctuary all the ministers reverence the altar. The altar is a symbol of Christ's presence (scripture says Jesus is the priest, victim, and altar of sacrifice), priests and deacons reverence the altar with a kiss. We sing a song to help us join together as one body with Jesus as our head. Then we make the sign of the cross which reminds us of our baptism, reminds us of the one God who is Father, Son, and Spirit and that we do this in the name of that God. The priest then greets everyone "The Lord be with you" - the response is unique and was mistranslated in the past: "and with your spirit." The people are affirming the spirit of Jesus placed in the priest at his ordination. Several other times this greeting is used, always when the people are asking Jesus to be present in the person of the priest - you are actually talking to Jesus, not the priest. It helps to remind the priest that he is only a person, that all that Jesus will do through him is because of Jesus' spirit.

We then ask God's forgiveness for minor faults and sins as we move forward to encounter the divine presence in the Eucharist. We reflect, we pray privately asking forgiveness, and all pray "Lord have Mercy" together. After this cleansing we are now able to say or sing aloud the great hymn of praise to God that is referenced in the Gospel of Luke "Glory to God." After asking God to prepare us, and giving God praise we now pause for private prayer. When the priest said "let us pray" it is an invitation for each person to pray privately to God as they enter the Mass, to speak to God what each one seeks in the Mass, to ask God to open us to receive in Word and in Eucharist the divine presence. All then mentally join the priest as he prays the opening prayer which is meant to collect all the prayers of the body and with one voice we send them to God. We now sit to hear the God whom we have opened ourselves to speak to us.

Homily

Think of how much we depend on our sight. The sense of vision in humans has an importance that can maybe only be really understood by someone who has lost their sight. Sight is our most refined sense, our sharpest sense, it is the main way that humans get information about the world. In Jesus' time blindness was not only the loss of abilities, there was a social stigma attached that left the disabled person rejected. When man asks Jesus to cure him - this is understandable - he wants to be able to do things that others can do, he doesn't want to be dependent, he doesn't want to be different, he doesn't want to be rejected. But through the miracle of his healing, Jesus shows us something about sight that has nothing to do with eyeballs.

Jesus is sensitive to all forms of blindness, whether it's the physical blindness that blocks our sight of the things in the world, the mental blindness that blocks our understanding, or the spiritual blindness that blocks our view to the realities of God. We all experience blindness at different times. It could be the temporary physical blindness we experience when we can't find

the light switch in the middle of the night, it could be the mental blindness of not being able to understand what a family member or friend is saying or doing, it may be the spiritual blindness that causes us to lose faith and feel disconnected from God. Jesus came to heal all the forms of blindness. We heard in the first reading: *I will gather them from the ends of the earth, with the blind and the lame in their midst ... they shall return as an immense throng.* Notice that the great throng includes those who are blind - we who have various forms of blindness are not left rejected, isolated, or forgotten. God reaches out to heal us so we can see the way.

We can miss the blindness of the mind and spirit that can make us ignorant of what God is doing in our lives - we can be blind to the fact that we are blind. God has compassion and understanding for us for, as we heard, *He is able to deal patiently with the ignorant and the erring.* He gets it that we don't see sometimes, he gets it that we are a little ignorant at times, he only asks that ***we get it too*** and come to him for help. Come to him for our sight to be restored.

The blind man in the Gospel, Bartimaeus, understood only his physical blindness and he calls out to Jesus: *"Jesus, son of David, have pity on me."* It's like he is saying "Look at me, I'm blind, I'm rejected, I am so miserable, don't you see how sad I am." Jesus speaks to him as he does to all of us today: ... *"What do you want me to do for you?"* Thinking of only his physical blindness Bartimaeus says *"Master I want to see."* Jesus knows that for Bartimaeus - and, let's be honest, for all of us - there's other blindness in need of healing. Whenever we approach Jesus to ask for healing of some sickness or character fault; when we come to him to heal a situation like a problem with a loved one or a difficult decision, he sees what else we need. He knows that in all of us there is a lack of full understanding, in all of us there is a lack of full spiritual insight. The faith of Bartimaeus that caused him to call out to Jesus for healing his physical sight was enough to get him into contact with Jesus so he could receive greater healing.

That same thing is open for us all. Have the faith to groan from the depths of our heart for the things that you know need to be healed, hear Jesus say to you *"What do you want me to do for you?"* As you pour out the needs you know about, realize that Jesus knows the blindness that we are - well ... blind to. We are often in more need of healing of mind and soul than we know. In fact, sometimes a change of mind or heart is just what is needed to cope with a difficult situation. Let us have faith in Jesus so that we can be healed from our many blindnesses, and then we can all join that great throng and hear the words of Jesus from the Gospel today: *Go your way [that is, the way to God], your faith has [not just healed blindness, it has] saved you.*