

**30<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME; Oct. 27<sup>th</sup> 2024**  
**Jeremiah 31:7-9; Hebrews 5: 1-6; Mark 10:46-52**

Dear Sisters & Brothers,

During the three years of his public ministry, so many people approached and followed Jesus with diverse interests and intentions. Most of them had physical and material interest, as Jesus was a miracle worker. Sometimes we see the followers getting a bit self-centered and trying to monopolize Jesus. On couple occasions the apostles too kept the same attitude. For instance, when the parents brought their children to Jesus for blessing, the apostles prevented them; another time their target was the Canaanite woman who came to Jesus with a loud cry for healing her daughter. In both cases it is Jesus who came to the rescue of the victims.

In today's incident of the blind man, Bartimaeus, it is the crowd that is becoming a hindrance on his way to Jesus. Remember, this is the only miracle in Mark in which he clearly gives the identity of the beneficiary as Bartimaeus and even his father's name as Timaheus. Jesus was on his last journey to Jerusalem and also it was the occasion of the Passover Feast. Naturally, a lot of pilgrims were on their way and they were gathered around Jesus with interest to listen to him. So the loud cry of Bartimaeus interrupted with their hearing and he was considered to be a nuisance. They didn't have any concern for this blind man at all. On the other hand, Bartimaeus was very persistent and cried out, **Jesus, Son of David**, have pity on me." He didn't give any attention to the protest of the crowd; rather he wanted to draw the attention of Jesus. For, this was his last chance to get a healing. It is clear that Jesus was annoyed by the indifferent and uncharitable attitude of the crowd. So Jesus took the initiative to get him closer and healed him. But Jesus was amazed by the faith of the blind man.

In the crowd apparently, the only blind man was Bartimaeus. But there were a lot of blind people in the crowd, who were spiritually blind and failed to see the dire need of that poor beggar. Instead of helping him to reach Jesus, they thought only of their convenience and selfish advantage. So they failed to see the blind Bartimaeus. Fr. De Mello, the Jesuit writer tells a story of a hermit. *One day he asked his disciples: "When do you say that the night is ended and it is morning? The first one said, "I say that it is morning when I can distinguish an oak tree from the maple." The hermit said, 'No.' The second one answered, "I know it is morning when I can distinguish a cow from a sheep at a distance." The hermit once again nodded his head in negation. The third one replied, "It is morning when no star is visible in the cloudless sky." The hermit disagreed with this answer too. Finally the he explained, "I know it is morning when I can recognize a person as a son or daughter of God, and hence my own brother or sister."* In this

context, the failure of the people was the same that they failed to see the poor blind beggar as their 'brother,' the son of God.

We can be happy that we live in a materially affluent nation and as a result we are pretty independent and self-sufficient and are not in need of the material help from others. This unhealthy materialism makes us blind to see Jesus and prevents others to reach Jesus. And also another danger is that we become more and more self-centered and fail to see others around us. The **I, me and mine** mentality is killing our community spirit and charity.

The uncharitable attitude of the crowd was a hindrance to Bertimaeus to reach Jesus. But he could overcome it by his persistence to reach Jesus. At last, he felt his cloak, the long outer garment, as an obstacle to reach Jesus soon enough and he threw it aside. We have to examine and see what hinders us to reach Jesus? Is it the material world? Is it the pressure of certain people? Does our unwelcoming and uncaring attitude towards our brothers and sisters prevent them to reach Jesus? As we get rid of the hindrance in us to reach Jesus, not only we come closer to Jesus but also we will help others to reach Jesus. Sometimes, a little welcoming attitude or an encouraging word can bring someone back to faith and Church. At the same time, our rash judgment and unkind words can drive someone away from the Church and Jesus. **As the hermit says, when we recognize our brother or sister as son and daughter of God, it is morning in our life; the darkness has vanished from us. The moment I ignore or disown them darkness descends upon me and I won't be able to see them but only myself.**