

Readings Jeremiah 37: 7-9; Hebrews 5: 1-6; Mark 10: 46-52



Fr Michael says:

Bartimaeus

“Lord, that I may see!” are words which are deeply significant, it goes beyond physical curing to the fundamental of the restoration of the eye of faith, which we need to look at our world and our lives. It is a new start: as is signified in the Jeremiah reading: there will be a new Exodus and new city and temple in Jerusalem. For Mark, Jesus is the one to bring salvation, hence also the call to Bartimaeus to follow Him. We all need sight and direction to have a sense of fulfilment in what we do!

A young man, who was blind from birth, met and fell in love with a young lady, the more time they spent together, the deeper the love came. A friend told him that the girl was not actually very good looking and he started to change, because he had been “seeing” her very well – it is the friend who is blind. He went by insight, not by appearances!

Blindness in Jesus’ time was very common, unlike now, where so much can be done in many ways. We might, therefore, think that his story is not relevant to us, but that is precisely the reason we do – we HAVE sight! How well do we actually see? How often have we said: “I couldn’t see it, it was right under my nose!” Mark seems to be saying that people, who are blind, could have more sight than us – in the perspective of insight and understanding. He confirms this when He says: “They have eyes, but they do not see!” They saw without believing in what they saw.

We can also have the darkness of unbelief, which cuts us off even more than physical blindness, spiritual sight is so much better than seeing with our eyes, it is a gift we should treasure and protect. We do this through being disciples, in imitation of Bartimaeus, who joins the walk to Jerusalem, with Jesus. He was ready to follow, unlike the chosen ones, who were still full of misunderstandings and hesitations, as the journey will reveal! We need to check over where we are with our sight and insight: what is truly important in life and how best do we live with the eye of faith looking at our world and what we are doing. This is our journey until we shall see God in the fullness of glory, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in the Kingdom.

Helen Keller wrote these words: she who is a lady, who went blind and deaf at 19 months: “One day I asked a friend of mine who had just returned from a long walk in the woods what she had seen. She replied, “Nothing in particular!”

“How was this possible” I asked myself, “When I, who cannot hear or see, find hundreds of things to interest me through mere touch. I feel the delicate shape and design of a leaf. I pass my hands lovingly over the rough bark of a pine tree. Occasionally, I place my hand quietly on a small tree, and I am lucky, feel the happy quiver of a bird in full song. The greatest calamity that can befall people is not that they should be born blind, but that they should have eyes, yet fail to see!”

Let us remember the words of Saint Exupery’s ‘Little Prince’: “It is only with the heart that we can see rightly!”