

The Thirtieth Sunday of Ordinary Time Cycle B 2021

We have a merciful God who is always willing to raise us up when we fall due to sin. When the rulers of Israel had put their trust in their armies and alliances and not in God, they lost his protection. Are we doing the same by trying to eliminate public prayer? The prophet Jeremiah, in today's first reading, gave hope and comfort to the defeated Jewish nation (the remnant of Israel) whose subjects were sent into exile. *"I will bring them back from the land of the North; I will gather them from the ends of the world, with the blind and the lame in their midst, the mothers and those with child . . . "* This God did not care only for the strong and brave, but his concern was also for the lowly ones, the blind, the lame, mothers, especially pregnant mothers. God's mercy and blessing is meant for everyone especially the lowly. His blessings upon our nation is to be shared by all.

St Paul refers to Jesus as a high priest whose job was to offer sacrifices of atonement for the sins of the people. He did this by offering himself as the sacrifice on the cross. However, the priests, including the high priest, were of the tribe of Levi. Jesus, through Joseph, was a descendant of David and of the tribe of Judah. Paul therefore tells us that Jesus is a high priest of the order of Melchizedek. Melchizedek was a high priest randomly chosen by God to offer a sacrifice for Abraham.

In spite of the many miraculous physical cures by Jesus in the Gospels, many Catholics are skeptical that miracles can be performed today. We embrace something called "science" and we discard mystery.

The story of the blind man, Bartimeus, provides the model of how to seek a miracle from Jesus. Bartimeus was told that Jesus of Nazareth was travelling close by. He cries out: "Jesus, Son Of David, have pity on me!" He did not call him

Jesus of Nazareth. Son of David was a **messianic term**. In today's terms he is calling Jesus his Lord and Savior. He refuses to be **discouraged** by others who told him to be quiet. He was **persistent** and eventually, Jesus called him. We too have to be persistent and ignore any negative comments. **Jesus knew what he wanted but he asked him what he wanted him to do.** We have to state what we need from God even if we think that he already knows. Because of his faith, Jesus told him that he was saved and then he also recovered his sight. In gratitude to God, he **immediately** became a disciple of Jesus. We need to acknowledge that Jesus is our Lord and Savior, we have to believe that he can help us, and we have to humbly ask for what we need. It should be something that benefits our health or spiritual life, or builds community or promotes faith. We need to follow Jesus once our wish is granted. That is, to be a regular at church. For some once their wishes are granted, they never return to church or even thank God.

There is also spiritual blindness which can be an obstacle to our spiritual growth. Some mysteries of our religion can only be seen through the eyes of faith.

Are we spiritually blind? Do we feel a deep gratitude for what Jesus has done for us on the cross? We can understand intellectually but do we feel it, as if we were grateful to a fireman who had rescued us from a burning building and certain death.

Do we recognize Jesus in the Eucharist? Do we recognize Jesus in the poor who suffer? Does the vision of the suffering of the poor make us feel sad and lose sleep in the same way as if a loved one was suffering? If we are unable to feel the pain and suffering of another, we probably do not love as much as we should.