

Monday of the Thirty-third Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Lk 18:35-43): As Jesus approached Jericho a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging, and hearing a crowd going by, he inquired what was happening.

They told him, “Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.” He shouted, “Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me!” The people walking in front rebuked him, telling him to be silent, but he kept calling out all the more, “Son of David, have pity on me!” Then Jesus stopped and ordered that he be brought to him; and when he came near, Jesus asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” He replied, “Lord, please let me see.” Jesus told him, “Have sight; your faith has saved you.” He immediately received his sight and followed him, giving glory to God. When they saw this, all the people gave praise to God.

“Your faith has saved you”

Fr. Antoni CAROL i Hostench
(Sant Cugat del Vallès, Barcelona, Spain)

Today, the blind beggar Bartimaeus (cf. Mk 10:46) gives us a complete lesson about faith, expressed with total simplicity in front of Christ. It would be good for us to repeat, every now and then, Bartimaeus' prayer: “Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me!” (Lk 18:37). It is so profitable for our soul to feel destitute! Because we certainly are though, unfortunately, very seldomly are we willing to admit it. And..., consequently, we make fools of ourselves. It is for that reason St. Paul reproaches us, when he says: “Who confers distinction upon you? What do you possess that you have not received? But if you have received it, why are you boasting as if you did not receive it?” (1Cor 4:7).

Bartimaeus is not ashamed of feeling like that. Quite often, our society, the culture of the “politically correct”, will try to shut us up: with Bartimaeus they were not able to. He did not shrink back: “The people (...) rebuked him, telling him to be silent, but he kept calling out all the more, “Son of David, have pity on me!” (Lk 18:39). What a wonderful thing! We feel like saying: Thank you Bartimaeus for this example.

And it does pay to do like him, because Jesus does listen. He always listens!, no matter how much noise some may make around us. Bartimaeus' simple but complete trust —uncomplicated— disarmed Jesus and got to His heart: “and ordered that he be brought to him, and when he came near, Jesus asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” (Lk 18:40-41). Before so much faith, Jesus does not waste his time! And... neither does Bartimaeus: “Lord, please let me see.” (Lk 18:41). And, no sooner said than done: “Have sight; your faith has saved you.” (Lk 18:42). Because, if “our faith is solid as a rock, it will also defend our home” (St. Ambrose), that is, it will overcome everything.

He is everything, He gives us everything. What else can we, then, do in His presence but give Him a reply of faith? And this “reply of faith” is equivalent to “let Him find us”, this God that —because of His affection for the Father— is looking for us from the very beginning. God does not impose Himself against our power of choice, but often enough He comes by close enough: let us, then, learn Bartimaeus' lesson and... let us not miss Him!

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“Through prayer we succeed in being with God. Prayer is certainty for sailors.” (Saint Gregory of Nyssa)

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“When humanity’s cry, like Bartimaeus’, becomes stronger still, there is no other response than to make Jesus’ words our own and, above all, imitate his heart. Today is a time of mercy!” (Francis)

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“Faith makes us taste in advance the light of the beatific vision, the goal of our journey here below. Then we shall see God "face to face"(1 Cor 13:12), "as he is" (Jn 3:2). So faith is already the beginning of eternal life...” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, n 163)