

Thursday of the Eighth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Mk 10:46-52): As Jesus was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a sizable crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind man, the son of Timaeus, sat by the roadside begging. On hearing that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, “Jesus, son of David, have pity on me.” And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he kept calling out all the more, “Son of David, have pity on me.”

Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.” So they called the blind man, saying to him, “Take courage; get up, Jesus is calling you.” He threw aside his cloak, sprang up, and came to Jesus. Jesus said to him in reply, “What do you want me to do for you?” The blind man replied to him, “Master, I want to see.” Jesus told him, “Go your way; your faith has saved you.” Immediately he received his sight and followed him on the way.

“Jesus, son of David, have pity on me.”

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Today, Christ comes out to meet us. We are all just like Bartimaeus: the blind beggar, whose side Jesus passed by, and who continued to call out until the Lord stopped and called him. We may have a more advantaged name... but our human weaknesses (moral) resemble the beggar's blindness. We cannot see either that Christ lives amongst our brothers and, thus, we treat them as we do. Perhaps, we fail to see in the social injustices, in the structures of sin, what through our eyes, is a scathing call for social commitment. Perhaps we do not fully grasp that “there is more joy in giving than in receiving”, that “no one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (Jn 15:13). What is clear looks blurry to us: that the mirrors of the world lead to frustration, and that the paradoxes of the Gospel,

after their hardships, bear fruits, fulfillment and life. We truly are visually weak, and this is not an euphemism, but a true fact: our will, weakened by sin, dims the truth in our intelligence making us pick out what is not suitable for us.

Solution: start calling out, like the beggar, that is, humbly pray “Jesus, son of David, have pity on me.” (Mk 10:48). And shout all the louder the more they scold you, the more they discourage you, the more you get dispirited: “And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he kept calling out all the more” (Mk 10:48). To call is also to beg: “Master, I want to see.” (Mk 10:51). Solution: to grow in our faith and beyond our certitude, trust in who loved us, created us and came to redeem us and remain amongst us in the Eucharist.

Saint John Paul II said the very same with the example of his life: his long hours of meditation —so many that his secretary complained that he prayed “too much”— tell us clearly that “he who pray changes History.”

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“Whatever else he did to restore bodies to health, he didn't do it to make them everlasting, even though at the end he is going to give the body too everlasting health and salvation. By these temporal benefits that were seen he was building up faith in the things that were not seen.” (Saint Augustine)

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“Faith is a journey of illumination: it starts with the humility of recognizing oneself as needy of salvation and arrives at the personal encounter with Christ, who calls one to follow him on the way of love.” (Benedict XVI)

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“This simple invocation (...) ‘Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us sinners’ (...) combines the Christological hymn of Philippians 2:6-11 with the cry of the publican and the blind men begging for light. By it the heart is opened to human wretchedness and the Savior's mercy.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, N° 2667)