

Fr. Rudy's Reflections
The Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time
October 27, 2024

Amazing Grace: *I Was Blind but Now I See*

My Brothers and Sisters in the Risen Lord,

In today's Gospel, Mark 10:46-52, we encounter a story that should resonate deeply with our faith in our modern lives: the healing of Bartimaeus, a blind beggar on the roadside. In an age filled with distractions and restoring our priorities, this miracle challenges us to reflect on our own spiritual blindness and narcissism. Bartimaeus is a figure of the marginalized—ignored and cast aside by society, much like how the poor and weak are often treated in our world. Yet, Jesus's response to him reveals the heart of our faith: compassion for those the world overlooks. Jesus does not walk past Bartimaeus. He stops, listens, and responds with mercy.

In Jesus's time, blindness often meant exclusion from community life. The blind were forced to beg for survival, dependent on the pity of others. Their condition was not just physical but social. They were often judged as sinners, as though their ailment were a punishment from God. Yet, Bartimaeus, even in his blindness, has a clear vision of who Jesus is—calling out to him as "Son of David." In this moment, Bartimaeus shows that his faith is already alive, even when his sight is not.

One of the most striking details in this story is that Bartimaeus, upon hearing Jesus's call, throws off his cloak. This cloak was likely his only possession, providing warmth and shelter. But to Bartimaeus, following Jesus was worth abandoning everything he had, even the bare essentials. His action symbolizes a radical detachment from the material, a letting go of anything that might hinder him from fully embracing Jesus's way. How often do we cling to our own "cloaks"—the possessions, comforts, or even pride—that prevent us from freely following Christ?

Bartimaeus's physical blindness is a mirror for our spiritual blindness. We, too, are often blind to the needs of those around us, to the poor, the suffering, the lonely. Like Bartimaeus, we need to call out for Jesus to have mercy on us and to open our eyes. But unlike Bartimaeus, we often fail to see our need for healing. Spiritual narcissism can make us focus only on our own desires and concerns, leaving us blind to what really matters. As Bartimaeus followed Jesus "on the way" after being healed, may we, too, follow Jesus, with open eyes and compassionate hearts, ready to throw off our attachments and respond to the needs of those around us. Let us see, as Bartimaeus did, with the eyes of faith.

"Our whole business in this Life is to restore to health the eye of the heart whereby God may be seen."—
St. Augustine

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Rudy