

Homily. 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time. Year. B. 26/27 October 2024.

What we know is that somehow Bartimaeus, in the old Aramaic of the time the son of Timaeus, had lost his sight. His family didn't have the money to support him and there being no such thing as insurance or a pension, he was found on the streets of Jericho begging for his survival. Likely, too, that he'd heard talk of Jesus the preacher and healer coming by, so with nothing to lose and much to gain he shouted out for help.

Jesus was now on his final journey and was leaving Jericho when this happened. He was focused on the coming uphill climb that he and his disciples would have to make to Jerusalem. As he'd indicated several times, Jesus knew that this would lead to a show-down with the Jewish and Roman powers, placing his life at fatal risk. Despite this and the crowd urging silence from noisy beggar, Bartimaeus didn't give up. Jesus heard him, halted his progress and asked what what it was that he could do for him? The result was the restoration of Bartimaeus sight and that he became the last disciple Jesus called to his way before his passion.

This put into my mind some words from the Letter of St. James which we heard here 5 weeks ago; Why you don't get what you want is because you don't pray for it; when you do ask for it you don't get it because you only pray to indulge your selfish desires. I also recalled the story from the 1st Book of Kings about the prayer of Solomon, just a teenager came to rule after the death of his father, King David. Sensing his inadequacy for the role he prayed to God who came to him asking what he wanted. Solomon asked for wisdom to govern God's people. We're told that God richly granted his prayer because he'd hadn't asked for wealth, power,

long life or anything for himself, but for what mattered most, discernment in his service of the well being of others.

Jesus life of service for us and his self-giving death, which came to pass only a few weeks after processing through Jericho and his encounter with Bartimaeus, shows us that this is what God is all about. It teaches us that our prayers are answered when they focus on helping others and when they further the best gift of all, our discipleship and the coming Reign of God's life and justice.

When we connect our minds and souls to this way of thinking, joining our prayers to the sacrificial prayer of Christ so central to our Eucharist, then what we ask will be both heard and answered. This leaves us to consider what God said to the young King Solomon and Jesus said to Bartimaeus the blind beggar of Jericho; What is it that we really need? What is it that you and I really want Jesus to do for us today?