

WORD FROM THE PASTOR

THE OVERFLOWING MERCY AND KINDNESS OF A LOVING, HEALING AND FORGIVING GOD FOR HIS CHILDREN



Today's gospel offers us a vibrant look at hope. As Jesus and the huge crowds following him began to leave Jericho, Bartimaeus, a blind man, sat by the side of the road begging. In a moment that would change his life, he heard the crowds talking as they walked and realized Jesus would be passing by the roadside. Bartimaeus began calling loudly for Jesus to have pity on him.

Who was this dirty, blind beggar sitting at the side of the road? The crowd was probably uncomfortable by the loudness of his request, seeing him as an embarrassment and a distraction. They tried to hush him. But Bartimaeus, who now had hope burning in his heart, would not be silenced. "Son of David!" he yelled again loudly. "Have pity on me!" Maybe Jesus wanted to soften the hearts of his followers – the ones who wanted to hush and ignore the blind man. So, rather than addressing Bartimaeus directly, he asked them to call Bartimaeus over to him. Now suddenly speaking kindly to him, they encourage Bartimaeus to take courage and go to Jesus.

A blind man would have to keep his possessions close to himself, within easy reach. But in an extraordinary gesture of confidence in Jesus' healing, he threw aside his cloak and rose to go to Jesus. He believed in Jesus – boldly enough to refer to him as "Son of David" – as if knowing that when he returned, he would be able to see to pick up his cloak. He had the courage to ask for the vision that would change his life.

I pause as I face my own daily blindness and wonder if I really want to ask Jesus to see. Do I want to be healed? I see families in division, government policies that hurt the poor, refugees that beg an unwilling world for help and people betrayed by their own church. If I see all this clearly, then what will I have to do? If I see where I can make a difference, what new challenges does that put in my life? Please, Jesus. Give me the courage to call out to you. I feel Jesus standing in front of me, loving me and asking, "What do you want me to do for you?" And then I know that I want Jesus to give me sight and take my hand and lead me. I have the words now: "Lord, I want to see."

Loving Jesus, open my eyes to see what you want me to see. And let me respond with your healing heart to care for those around me. Guide me to remember that you will be with me when I see some of the painful and frightening situations around me and show me how to let them into my heart. I trust that if you let me see with your eyes of love and feel with the warmth of your heart, then you will give me the grace to respond to you. You know that I really do want to respond to your call more freely and without fear in my daily life, to my family, to those around me and to this conflicted world where so many are in pain.

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