

O. T. XXX SUNDAY JER 31:7-9; HEB 5: 1-6; MARK 10:46-52 (OCT 25th)

Today's Gospel describes Jesus' final journey to Jerusalem through Jericho, an ancient city, fifteen miles away from Jerusalem. The story of Bartimaeus is the last healing miracle recorded in the Gospel of Mark. The story is presented dramatically. While the majority of those who received healing in the New Testament are not mentioned by name, in this case the beggar's name is given as Bartimaeus, which means son of Timaeus. When the people told Bartimaeus the news of Jesus' passage through the city, he began to shout his remarkable statement of faith: "*Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.*" Jesus was surrounded by a large crowd. Amid the noise and dust, people were jostling for attention, and beggars cried out for alms. In spite of this tumult Jesus heard one voice crying out through the noise of the crowd.

The people conveyed Jesus' invitation to Bartimaeus, "Take courage, Jesus is calling you" and he responded by jumping up and running to Jesus. By addressing Jesus as *Son of David*, the beggar publicly identified Jesus as the Messiah. At Jesus' summons, Bartimaeus threw aside his long cloak, his only possession, which protected him from heat and cold. In throwing away his cloak, he gave up everything he had depended on, putting his complete trust in the Lord. Jesus then asked: "*What do you want me to do for you?*" Bartimaeus replied promptly: "*Master, I want to see.*" Jesus rewarded his faith by restoring both his physical and spiritual sight. Having received physical and spiritual sight, Bartimaeus *followed Jesus joyfully along the road*. The gift of sight led Bartimaeus to faith, and faith came to full expression in committed discipleship. He wanted to stay close to his Savior, to thank, praise, and serve Him. Thus today's Gospel presents Bartimaeus as the model for us in his prayer and in his wholehearted commitment to a discipleship that includes rejection by those who refuse to believe.

The healing of the blind Bartimaeus contains four main elements of Christian discipleship: a) the correct recognition of Jesus as Lord and Savior ("*Jesus, Son of David*"); b) the acknowledgement of the need for Jesus' help ("*Have pity on me*"; "*I want to see*"); c) ready response to Jesus'

call ("*He . . . came to Jesus*"); and d) becoming Jesus' disciple ("*... followed him on the way*").

Like Bartimaeus, we must seek Jesus with trust in his goodness and mercy. Sometimes our fears, anger and habitual sins prevent us from approaching God in prayer. At times, we even become angry with God when He seems slow in answering our prayers. In those desperate moments, let us approach Jesus in prayer with trusting faith as Bartimaeus did and listen carefully to the voice of Jesus asking us : "*What do you want me to do for you?*" Let us tell Him all our heart's intentions and needs.

