

30th Sunday of Ordinary Time (B)

Jer 31:7-9; Heb 5:1-6; Mk 10:46-52

Two nuns were driving down a country road one day when they ran out of gas.

They walked to a farmhouse and a farmer gave them some gasoline; but the only container he had was an old bedpan. The nuns were happy to take whatever they were offered and returned to their car.

As they were pouring the gasoline from the bedpan into the tank of their car, a Protestant minister drove by. He stopped, rolled down his window and said, "Excuse me, sisters. I'm not of your religion, but I couldn't help admiring your faith!"

Faith is a marvelous thing.

Blind Bartimaeus had faith in this Jesus that he had never seen, but had heard about. His faith was great enough to take the chastisement from the fickle crowd. His faith was great enough that he recognized that Jesus was not a mere miracle worker, but something greater, because he called Jesus "the son of David". In the Hebrew Scriptures, the Prophet Jeremiah writes "'Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "That I

will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." (Jeremiah 23:5-6)

So, among the Jewish people, it was not just a honorary title to be called "Son of David" ...it was the mark of the Messiah.

Now, perhaps some in the crowd didn't like what Bartimaeus said. They felt that he was speaking blasphemy.

Perhaps, because he was a blind beggar they were prejudiced against him, and felt he should be not seen or heard. We have people like that in our society today: The lost and abandoned; people that we meet on the streets that we try to ignore.

But when Jesus called to him, the crowd seemed to change their tune pretty quickly. We have people like that in our society today as well.

They are swayed by popular opinion and have no strong opinions of their own.

I am sure that we have all met people like that who can be nasty to strangers until they find that they are someone important or that they have friends in high places. People like that are like the seeds that Jesus mentions in his famous parable of the sower of the seeds. They fall on the ground but are easily swept away. They are swept away because (unlike Bartimaeus), they have little faith.

Faith is not an easy thing. Faith is the confident belief or trust in the truth or trustworthiness of a person, idea, or thing. Faith in God requires something extra from us.

Faith in God requires believing in God's love and care even when things are not going so great for you. You know, life isn't an easy road to travel.

We all deal with hardships that are physical and mental and spiritual.

People get sick; people are abused; people are injured; people lose their jobs; people get into debt; people get divorce; people die...

The list of the bad things that can happen can go on for quite a while, and any of these things can cause us to lose our faith. We wonder if God is real because He doesn't seem to be answering our prayers.

It is one of the great questions of life: Why do bad things happen to good people and why does God allow evil to exist?

I don't really have an answer for you. I have been trying to figure this out for a long time, myself, but I do have faith that God loves us and cares for us and wants the best for us.

Faith is based on understanding and understanding comes from seeking to know God better. Faith comes from our teachings and traditions, from the Scriptures and from our own personal experiences

Faith is also a gift...a gift we need to accept.

Faith is saying to “Yes” to God even when it may seem to make more sense to us to say “No”

We need to have faith...the faith of Bartimaeus who believed in a Jesus he had never seen.

A type of faith that Jesus says will save us.

Jesus told Bartimaeus to go on his way, but he followed Jesus instead.

Because if you have faith in Jesus, you don't want to go your own way.

We have tried that already.

We need the love and support that only God can give.

As Jeremiah says in our first reading today:

“I will console them and guide them;

I will lead them to brooks of water,

on a level road, so that none shall stumble.”

God is there for you...have faith.

