

Homily for the 30th Sunday of the Year

What marvels the Lord worked for us, indeed we were glad! Just for a moment we might think of the marvels in our own lives. It may be a family member or a little miracle that happened in the midst of some suffering or hardship. For the people Jeremiah was speaking about in the first reading it was the return from exile, the blind, the lame, women with child, women in labour, a great company returning here, no one was left out. In terms of the second reading we might reflect on the marvel of Christ taking on our human nature calling all of us to live life to the full by immersing ourselves in life's challenges, responding to the needs and sufferings of others.

Then we come to the gospel we have several marvels! As Jesus is leaving Jericho with his disciples and a large crowd to make the short journey to Jerusalem, we are introduced to Bartimaeus, who didn't have a lot going for him because he was blind and had to resort to begging. He may have been blind but he could certainly hear, and he could speak, indeed shout, 'Son of David, Jesus, have pity on me.' 'Son of David' is a biblical term for the Messiah, someone whom God would send to help those waiting a long time along life's many roadsides. He may have been physically blind, but Bartimaeus has spiritual sight, he sees what others do not. At this stage the crowd turn against him and tell him to keep quiet. Not a chance, he shouts all the louder, and this time Jesus stops and tells them to send him over. There is another little marvel because there is new sight on the part of the crowd who now move from being obstructive to paving a way for his meeting with Jesus.

Bartimaeus now throws off his cloak, probably his most important possession – think of the Rich young man of a couple of weeks ago – jumps up and goes to Jesus. And now one of the most marvellous questions in the whole of the Gospels, Jesus, the Son of David, that is the Messiah, asks Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, 'What do you want me to do for you?' There isn't a moment's hesitation or indeed doubt, 'Master that I may see again,' suggesting that physical blindness had come later in life. His determination and total belief in Jesus are rewarded, 'Go; your faith has saved you.' And where does he go? Right behind Jesus, following him on the way, his life changed for ever.

This is the last miracle story in Mark's Gospel in which Jesus works a marvel of restoring sight, it is also the only one in which the person healed is named. There is such a huge amount for us to ponder, blindness and sight, both physical and metaphorical. Obstruction and encouragement on the part of the crowd, persistence and certainty on behalf of Bartimaeus and a change from beggar to disciple, no longer sitting on the roadside but following on the way. What answer would we give if Jesus asked us, 'What do you want me to do for you?' What would we want him to help us see? What marvels the Lord worked for us, indeed we were glad. The invitation is to look out for any marvels this coming week to encourage each one of us as we follow Jesus on the way.

Bidding Prayers for 30th Sunday – World Mission Sunday

Celebrant:

Let us be confident in approaching the throne of grace, that we shall have mercy from him and find grace when we are in need of help.

Reader:

For the mission of the Church – that we may all be faithful to sharing the Good News of God's unconditional love for all people.

Lord in your mercy

For all missionaries – that they may persevere in their humble service of those in greatest need.

Lord in your mercy

For the work of Missio, the Holy Father's official charity for overseas mission – that our support of Churches too young or too poor to support themselves will bear fruit in plenty.

Lord in your mercy

For the Catholic Church in Nigeria – that it may flourish in its ministry of healing and reconciliation.

Lord in your mercy

For those who have died, all victims of violence, accident, natural disaster and the COVID19 pandemic, and John Lancashire, Catherine Kennedy and Donald Madden whose anniversaries occur this week – that they and all who have died may rest in peace and rise in glory.

Lord in your mercy

Either aloud or in silence we pray for our own special intentions...pause...then

Lord in your mercy

We ask the prayers of Mary as we say, Hail Mary...

Celebrant:

God our father, may your love be upon us as we place all our hope in you, through Christ our Lord. Amen