

30 OTB.18; Jer 31:7-9; Heb 5:1-6; Mark 10:46-53 ... *“I want to see like Bartimaeus”*

Let me tell you the story of Letitia & her grandson, Jimny....

It was experienced by Mary McGlone. She writes,

“Last year I went on a minibus ride with clients of a *center for people with disabilities in Ecuador*. Sitting next to me was **Letitia**, a petite, wrinkled and worn 60-yo woman who was propping up her severely disabled 7-yo grandson, **Jimny**. As we chatted, she talked of how grateful she was that *while* the boy received therapy, a special education teacher was teaching her to read & write.

As Jimny’s only caretaker & support, Letitia was determined to learn to read ... so that no one could take advantage of them.

She admitted that it was *very hard*. Her hands were more accustomed to caring for animals & cooking than to holding a pen, but she explained that once she got a secondhand pair of reading glasses, the task seemed possible and she could already could sign her own name.

She ended her story with her standard refrain, “Gracias a Dios.”

I was overwhelmed by her combination of *courage & humility*, fairly certain that I could never have summoned the necessary grit to tackle the task of becoming literate at that age. Our conversation reminded me of how *effortlessly* education, *nutrition & countless opportunities* have come to me, of how *easy* it is to keep my hands clean. **Letitia represents many of the people God sends**

... [to teach us all about the reality of faith].

A bit like Bartimaeus *the blind beggar* who desired only to be able *to see*, she believes God will *give her the help* she needs ... *in spite of the odds.*”

Letitia is able to see a new reality for her grandson and for herself.

(Source: *Celebration*, 10/28/18)

Let’s recall that Bartimaeus *initiated* his first encounter with Jesus while sitting along *the way* Jesus was walking on his final journey up to Jerusalem. Bartimaeus, was not about to let his opportunity go by. He *cried out* (i.e., yelled) to Jesus as a *royal son of David*, who was a king responsible to care for the poor:

... “Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me.”

The gospel artfully contrasts the disciples & Bartimaeus. Ever since Jesus turned toward Jerusalem he had been trying to prepare his disciples for all that was to come, **but they refused to see his point.** James and John demanded that Jesus give them seats of power in his new kingdom. Jesus informs them that prestige ... and power were not part of God’s Kingdom of love and service.

When Jesus *asked* Bartimaeus what HE wanted from him, Bartimaeus responded without hesitation, **“Master, I want to see.”** Bartimaeus wanted precisely what ... the disciples were avoiding: ***to see things clearly.***

His was THE request Jesus longed to grant and one that he could grant only to ... someone who had the faith and the courage-to-ask for it.

2 Blindness had imprisoned Bartimaeus in a small and dangerous world in which he was *never certain* of where he was going. Like Letitia, he trusted Jesus as the *Son of David*, the one who cares for the Poor, the one who sees life differently, ... the one who sees new possibilities in everyone!

Perhaps Bartimaeus would tell us what Pope Francis has said in the Gospel of Joy. “*When we are tempted to keep the Lord’s wounds at arm’s length, Jesus invites us to touch human misery and the suffering flesh of others: He hopes that we will stop looking for those personal and communal niches which shelter us from human misfortune and enter into the reality of other people’s lives*” (#270).

And here is where *the real* “miracle” is found today.

When Bartimaeus gained his sight, *he chose* to follow Jesus. He was not satisfied to merely see the sights, to find familiar faces and places in his hometown. He wanted to see the world from ... **Jesus' point of view:** to see the people and the places and the problems and the possibilities that Jesus saw.

Reality is a matter of interpretation ... of “what is real.”

Helen Keller said it well, “*There are none so blind as those who refuse to see.*”

Helen Keller

Sometimes in the middle of all the noise from life’s business and struggles, it’s possible ***not to see, hear or feel*** the people near us that need a helping hand. There is so much noise around us that we would... like to escape it and not be bothered.

We don’t want to see, although we are in the middle of the community.

Yet, if we follow Bartimaeus to Jesus, **we are changed**. We have his new reality that widens our horizon, that envelopes our world in a compassionate embrace in which *we truly make a difference*. Following Jesus leads us to a *divine-human* communion with others and an engagement with the world, regardless of the cost. If our faith ***sits at the roadside***, looking blindly inward, it lacks the intentionality of discipleship. It lacks integrity. Faith that enthusiastically ***gets-up*** in response to Jesus’ call restores both us and the community. Jesus is asking you and me right now: **What do you want? Do you want to see what I see?**

Today, the Gospel indicates ***the ‘way,’*** not the destination.

The Kingdom of God is here, not in some far away heaven.

Eternal life starts now, not sometime later.

It's not where you've come from, but where you are heading that counts

- the heavenly Jerusalem! **If you only knew how much God loves you!**

At this Liturgy of Heaven's Vision, remember that God's interpretation of reality

... **is** one of infinite *Potential, Possibility, and Promise*.

"Take courage and get up, Jesus is calling you."