

Meditations: Sunday of the Thirtieth Sunday of Ordinary Time (Year B)

Some reflections that can assist our prayer during the thirtieth week of Ordinary Time. The topics are: the “Bartimaeuses” in our lives; Jesus heals the senses; purifying our gaze.

- The “Bartimaeuses” in our lives
- Jesus heals the senses
- Purifying our gaze

BARTIMAEUS IS a blind man who usually spends his days *sitting by the roadside begging* (*Mk 10:46*), the evangelist tells us. We can imagine the monotony of his life. His blindness has sharpened his sense of hearing, and he recognizes the attitudes of the passersby without seeing them. He is accustomed to people's indifference, and as a result he is even more grateful when anyone stops to give him coins and converse with him.

One day, something extraordinary happened. The usual trickle of people along the road swelled to a crowd. When Bartimaeus learned that the reason for the commotion was Jesus' arrival, he became excited. He must have heard about Jesus' miracles and was convinced that He was the long-awaited Messiah. So he began to shout, *'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!'* Although many of those present told

him to be quiet, he continued to shout all the louder, ‘Son of David, have mercy on me!’ His cries had an effect: Christ stopped, called him over, and asked him what he wanted (cf. *Mk 10:47-50*).

It was easy to guess what Bartimaeus wanted to ask for, but Jesus “takes time to listen. This is the first step in helping the journey of faith: listening. [...] In contrast, many of those with Jesus ordered Bartimaeus to be quiet (cf. *Mk 10:48*). For such disciples, a person in need was a nuisance along the way, an obstacle unexpected and unforeseen. They preferred their own timetable above that of the Master, their own talking over listening to others. They were following Jesus, but they were thinking about their own plans.”^[1] As we pray now, we can ask our Lord to help us stop before the “Bartimaeuses” in our lives, the

friends or strangers around us who ask for our attention, care, and help.

GO, YOUR faith has saved you (Mk 10:52). With these words, Bartimaeus immediately regained his sight. The Gospel accounts show us many miracles like this one, related to the senses: the deaf regain their hearing, the mute speak, the paralyzed begin to walk again... These miracles were signs of the Messiah's coming, and their significance went beyond physical healing. Jesus announces a new reality, no longer marked by sin, but to perceive it, we need to renew our senses. It is not only the sick who need healing. Many of Jesus' contemporaries listened to his discourses and witnessed his miracles but refused to accept his message of salvation because of the blindness of their hearts.

Today, too, Jesus is willing to heal our senses so that we can recognize this new reality. Indeed, daily life contains a beauty that is not always visible to our eyes. Work, care for our families, pious practices, service, rest... All our activities can lead to a “lively awareness of eternity”^[2] when carried out with love and a supernatural outlook. Seeking to see with Christ’s eyes frees us from an often violent relationship with reality and other people, since we are striving to live immersed in God’s omnipotent love. We start seeing opportunities to give glory to God in every moment of the day. Once, when Saint Josemaría was once asked about a Christian response to everyday problem, he pointed out that a life of prayer and intimate union with God helps us see things differently: “We judge with different criteria; we see things through the eyes of a soul set on eternity and the eternal love of God.”^[3]

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LIKE BARTIMAEUS, we can ask Jesus to heal our sight. We may find that we possess a judgmental gaze, which leads us to focus only on others' faults and to label them; or a possessive gaze that objectifies other people, accepting only the parts of them that seem to benefit us. In both cases, our vision of others is superficial. However, Jesus "always looks at each person with mercy and indeed with predilection."^[4]

The way we look at others partly depends on our inner world. Indeed, we all have within us a set of desires, affections, and hopes that shape our relationship with the world and other people. When these faculties are progressively purified by grace and aligned with our true identity, we develop a capacity to connect with and enjoy all that is beautiful, noble, and genuinely enjoyable; we

learn to savor the little things in life and in our relationships with those around us. Above all, we savor the greatness of a love that knows no barriers and expands our hearts to unimaginable limits.

“If the love of God has planted deep roots in a person, then he is able to love even those who do not deserve it, as God does us. Fathers and mothers do not love their children only when they deserve love; they always love them, though of course, they make them understand when they are wrong. We learn from God to seek only what is good and never what is evil. We learn to look at each other not only with our eyes, but with the eyes of God, which is the gaze of Jesus Christ.”^[5] — We can ask the Virgin Mary to purify our hearts so that we may know how to look at others through her Son’s eyes.

^[1] Pope Francis, Homily, 28-X-2018.

^[2] Saint Josemaría, *Friends of God*, no. 239.

^[3] Saint Josemaría, Notes from a family gathering, 4-XI-1972.

^[4] Pope Francis, Audience, 11-I-2023.

^[5] Pope Benedict XVI, Angelus, 4-XI-2012.

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