

Homily for the 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time
St. Francis of Assisi Church – Belchertown, Massachusetts
October 28, 2018



Scripture Readings: [Jeremiah 31:7-9](#) ✕ [Psalm 126](#) ✕ [Hebrews 5:1-6](#) ✕ [Mark 10:46-52](#)



One day, an unusually joyful Charlie Brown said to Linus, “I feel good. I just got back from the grocery store. The owners, a husband and his wife, both complimented me. They told me I was a very nice boy.” But Linus replied, “In the sixth chapter of St. Luke it is written, ‘Woe to you when all people speak well of you.’” Deflated, Charlie Brown leaned put his head in his hands and said, “So much for feeling good!”

Bartimaeus, the blind beggar, didn’t fare so well either. When he heard that Jesus was passing by, he cried out to Him. But people told him to be silent. In other stories people carried their sick to Jesus for healing. Why do these people rebuke Bartimaeus?

Every event in Jesus’ life shows both love and hate. Those who love are Jesus and those He saves. Those who hate are Satan and his followers. It is only with the heart that we can uncover the hidden drama of love and hate that is taking place in this story and others in Jesus’ life.

Jesus was passing through Jericho for the last time on His way to Jerusalem, where He would be crucified. Jesus saw people in danger and came to save them. Satan saw a Challenger and came to stop Him.

Three years earlier, Jesus revealed the depths of His heart in a synagogue at Nazareth when he quoted the prophet Isaiah: “The spirit of the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor, release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, freedom to the oppressed”

But the people of Nazareth didn’t see Jesus as their Savior; they saw their neighbor, a simple carpenter, and they took offense at His claims and His admonitions. Satan was also there that day. Urged by that dark spirit, the people rebuked Jesus and tried to throw Him off the cliffs at the edge of town. So, He left.

Three years later, the Passover is near; thousands are journeying to Jerusalem. Blind Bartimaeus sits down on the roadside, spreads his cloak to catch coins that some of the pilgrims might toss into it. This beggar is so beneath all of those who pass by that even his name is symbolic of his

condition: Bartimaeus; a name that means “son of the unclean.” Back then, blindness and every kind of sickness were considered to be the result of personal sin. Yet, his heart is beautiful and sees a hidden truth.

When Jesus passes by, Bartimaeus hears His voice. Someone in the crowd tells him it is Jesus of Nazareth. (After three years, all they see is a Galilean passing by). Bartimaeus is blind but sees clearly with his heart and cries out, “Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me.”

This is too much for Satan. His heart is so blind with hate that he wants everyone to share his total darkness. The crowd becomes Satan’s voice by telling Bartimaeus to be silent.

But Bartimaeus has heard the voice of the Savior and shouts even louder, “Son of David, have pity on me!” Then Jesus stops and calls him. He gazes at the blind man and says, “What do you want me to do for you?” “Master,” he says, “I want to see.” Jesus says to him, “Go your way, your faith has saved you.” Immediately he received his sight and followed Him on the way.”

In earlier miracles of healing, Jesus imposed silence on those healed. But now, Bartimaeus follows Jesus from the wilderness into the Holy City all the while proclaiming the Son of David. Following his example, the crowd now calls Jesus by that title: “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest.”

Bartimaeus must have been devastated when, just a week later, he saw Jesus crucified, when Satan tried to put out the Light of Christ by the darkness of death. But the shadow of death could not extinguish the Light of Life, and it was swallowed up by the Dawn at the Resurrection.

The world has many distractions that keep us from seeing Jesus in our midst. May we have pure hearts and souls that clearly see and seek the healing presence of Jesus in our lives. ✕