

Sunday October 24th, 2021  
**30th Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**Parishioner Reflection**

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*"I want to see."*

Sight is by far our most dominant sense, it is the one we rely on for information about our environment. Most of our impressions are determined by sight and most of the decisions we make on a daily basis are in part influenced by our means of sight. In Mark's Gospel today Bartimaeus, a persistent and courageous blind beggar is healed. Despite the efforts of the crowds and the disciples to silence him, he calls out to Jesus repeatedly refusing to be silenced. He wants to see and knows that Jesus is the one who can give him sight.

The miracle stories we find in the Gospels teach us a great deal about Jesus and demonstrate for us, as they did to the audience of the time, Christ's relationship with God the Father. They serve to strengthen our faith by highlighting the message and teachings of the gospel. When we read the stories of Mark's Gospel we see that faith does not come easily. Often, individuals need to overcome obstacles to obtain what they seek. Mark puts his focus on one's personal choice to act as essential to faith development and attainment. This is beautifully depicted in today's gospel: Bartimaeus is persistent until he gets the attention of the master Himself. Then despite his actual blindness it is Bartimeus who sees Jesus for who He is, identifying Him as the Messiah with the words "Jesus, Son of David". He sees Jesus more clearly than the disciples

and the crowds who have been following all along. Yet when Jesus asks him “*what do you want from me?*” His answer is simply “*I want to see.*”

In language there are different kinds of sight. We use metaphors about vision to explain the human experience in conversations and in literature. A ‘*vision*’ can refer to an imagined plan for the future, to ‘*lose sight of*’ can mean to go off course of a goal or project, and ‘*blind*’ is often used to describe a lack of understanding. This story of the healing of the blind man invites us to consider how faith is manifested and developed, as well as how it is prevented from flourishing within our communities. From the gospel today come many questions to reflect on that require us to look inward. Do we who have sight want it in all its fullness, with all that it holds and promises? Do we truly want to see with our hearts? What are the things in our life that make us blind? What limits us and prevents us from reaching our potential both in life and in faith? What distracts us so that we are blind to those around us and the needs of those in our community? I imagine that when we are gifted with sight in its fullness, it comes with a cost to us and demands of us a certain life. Exactly the personal choice to act that Mark identifies as necessary for faith.

We need to identify with Bartimaeus.

I want to see... the church full again, ministries flourishing within the parish,  
I want to see my friends and family together, and an end to the pandemic. I want to see justice in the world and play an active part in achieving it. I want to see reconciliation and continue to work towards the healing of the communities we have hurt. I want to

see inclusion, acceptance, and respect for others different from myself, I want to see respect among different faith communities. I want to see Christ in others. I want to see.

What do we want from Jesus?

What do I want from Jesus? The health and safety of my children and husband, a safe and just world for them to grow up in, an end to the pandemic for sure. But each of these desires are also things that I must actively take part in achieving. As Mark stresses, they require my personal choice and willingness to act.

Near the end of the gospel reading the focus changes. It is the only time in this gospel where we hear that the healed, *followed Jesus on the way*. This one sentence is very important because it lets us, the reader, know that with the gift of healing and sight, comes responsibility. Where does Bartimeus follow him? He receives sight and is given a new life. He then chooses to follow Christ on His path to Calvary and His death on the cross. I think that without all our distractions and blindness, it would be impossible to choose anything other than to follow Christ wholeheartedly on the road that cannot be an easy one. But that road ends in Resurrection.

“Take courage: get up he is calling you”