

Readings for October 28, 2018 -- 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time

I Want To See

When we recognize that the Lord is constantly doing "great things for us" we know that we can approach Jesus with confidence, and ask him for what we want. Jesus wants to help us discover our desires.

Opening Prayer: (See back pages)

Reading 1 JER 31:7-9

Thus says the LORD: Shout with joy for Jacob, exult at the head of the nations; proclaim your praise and say:

The LORD has delivered his people, the remnant of Israel.

Behold, I will bring them back from the land of the north;

I will gather them from the ends of the world,

with the blind and the lame in their midst,

the mothers and those with child;

they shall return as an immense throng.

They departed in tears, but I will console them and guide them;

I will lead them to brooks of water,

on a level road, so that none shall stumble.

For I am a father to Israel, Ephraim is my first-born.

Responsorial Psalm PS 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6

R. (3) The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.

When the LORD brought back the captives of Zion,

we were like men dreaming.

Then our mouth was filled with laughter,

and our tongue with rejoicing.

R. The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.

Then they said among the nations,

"The LORD has done great things for them."

The LORD has done great things for us; we are glad indeed.

R. The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.

Restore our fortunes, O LORD,

like the torrents in the southern desert.

Those that sow in tears shall reap rejoicing.

R. The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.

Although they go forth weeping,
carrying the seed to be sown,
They shall come back rejoicing,
carrying their sheaves.

R. The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.

Reading 2 HEB 5:1-6

Brothers and sisters:

Every high priest is taken from among men
and made their representative before God,
to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.

He is able to deal patiently with the ignorant and erring,
for he himself is beset by weakness
and so, for this reason, must make sin offerings for himself
as well as for the people.

No one takes this honor upon himself but only when called by God, just as Aaron was.

In the same way,

it was not Christ who glorified himself in becoming high priest,
but rather the one who said to him:

You are my son: this day I have begotten you;

just as he says in another place: *You are a priest forever
according to the order of Melchizedek.*

Gospel MK 10:46-52

As Jesus was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a sizable crowd,
Bartimaeus, a blind man, the son of Timaeus, sat by the roadside begging.

On hearing that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say,

"Jesus, son of David, have pity on me."

And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent.

But he kept calling out all the more, "Son of David, have pity on me."

Jesus stopped and said, "Call him."

So they called the blind man, saying to him,

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

He threw aside his cloak, sprang up, and came to Jesus.

Jesus said to him in reply, "What do you want me to do for you?"

The blind man replied to him, "Master, I want to see."

Jesus told him, "Go your way; your faith has saved you."

Immediately he received his sight and followed him on the way.

Related Reflections:

“In spiritual traditions, blindness is the inability to notice, understand, and integrate the spiritual dimension of life. Without this ability, we have no true wealth... In this condition of not knowing we are sons and daughters of the Living One, we become beggars...

If our cry is loud enough and refuses to be silent, the one who hears all cries for liberation will stand still. He will stop on his journey toward the destiny of his revelation in order to call us to join him. Everyone who begs from their heart for sight is heard by the clear-sighted one.

For Christians, followers of Jesus, our great desire is to understand and enter into the revelation of the Cross and Resurrection. Every day I beg the Father of Jesus to have mercy on my blindness. It is a tribute to the thoroughness of my blindness, that it is only recently that I stopped waiting for mercy and have come to understand that it is begging that clears the cataracts.”

John Shea, The Spiritual Wisdom of the Gospels, Year B, Liturgical Press, 2005

Sickness is contrary to God's Desires

The message of Jesus' miracles is clear: Jesus embodies the power of God, the healer... However, while it's true that being sick is no fun, we have to stop telling people that their sickness is their “cross to bear” as if God assigns illnesses to people. When Jesus said that anyone who wishes to be his disciple must pick up his cross and follow him, he was not suggesting that illness was one way of doing that. While it is true that we can find meaning in our suffering by uniting it with Jesus' suffering on the Cross, this is not the cross that Jesus was referring to. The cross that disciples must bear is the pain that one endures precisely for claiming to be a follower of Jesus. Sickness, on the other hand, is a burden that Jesus wishes to relieve. Living with illness is contrary to both our desires and God's. In the Gospels, Jesus cures many physical maladies, including blindness. Each of these healings is a sign that God is on our side in our fight against these interruptions into his creation. Jesus did not wipe out all disease and illness; that remains for the end of time. However, he did make it clear that we are not alone, nor are we powerless, when we face these maladies. God, our healer is with us. These healings also speak to us on a symbolic level; we may be experiencing spiritual forms of paralysis or blindness. If Jesus can cure these maladies on the physical level, he is certainly capable of curing them on other levels that are less visible.

Joe Paprocki, Living the Sacraments, Loyola Press, 2018

Did you see that?

A fundamental perspective of St. Ignatius: In our spiritual life we ought to pray for greater awareness and attentiveness. Do we really experience the life around us, or does it blow by us at the fever pitch of progress? A simple starting point is to pay closer attention to our lives and the people and events that fill them. It is as if St. Ignatius is constantly prodding us, saying “Did you see that? Did you notice what you were feeling in that moment? Can you experience God in all of this? Ask God to show you.”

Patrick McGrath, S.J. reprinted in An Ignatian Book of Days, by Jim Manney, Loyola Press, 2014

Possible activity or meditation:

Write down an area in your life where you have come to realize that you are blind. What might be some causes for this “blindness?”

Imagine Jesus approaching you and asking: "What do you want me to do for you?"

Write down the stumbling blocks to asking Jesus for sight in that area. What might help to get rid of these obstacles?

Continue to pray about this exercise in the coming weeks, until you feel able, when Jesus approaches, to ask Jesus for sight.

Share with the group one thing that you would like to see more clearly in your life. (It can be the area that you wrote about above or another thing that you may be more willing to share).

Or: Write down an area of your life that needs healing, that would benefit from the healing touch of Jesus. Imagine Jesus asking you what it is that you'd like healed. Imagine his healing presence constantly with you. Continue to pray about it during this coming week.

Discussion questions:

Learning to see is about paying attention. Are there things you can't see that help to sustain and enrich your life? Are there things that may be too familiar in your life and you overlook them?

What about the sacraments? They provide us with an "outward sign" that makes God's grace visible. Have you ever had an experience of seeing the grace a sacrament has provided? What was this like? How do the sacraments change us or sustain us?

What kind of prayer can you practice each day that can help you to see life's ordinary miracles for what they are?

How can an awareness of God's active presence in your life change the way you live and love others?

Activity for the week:

Sometime this week, choose a color. Pay attention to all the variations of that color you encounter over the course of the day. If it helps to keep a written list of the things you see, do so. As you admire the colors, think about them as a testament to God's creative abundance.

Think about the variety of colors in the world. Ponder the fact that the human race reflects that diversity. Give thanks to God for treating us to such visual richness.

From Taste & See, by Ginny Kubitz Moyer, Loyola Press, 2016

Closing Prayers (or see back pages for other options):

In Christ, O God, your healing power
restores to health a weary world.
In the word spoken here,
Christ bids us rise up and live;
To see everything more clearly.

Cast out our fear and revive our faith.
Make us live each day
in the joy for which you fashioned us. *Through Christ our Lord, Amen.*

Or:

*O Lord my God,
Teach my heart this day where and how to see you,
Where and how to find you.
You have made me and remade me,
And you have bestowed on me
All the good things I possess,
And still I do not know you.
I have not yet done that
For which I was made.
Let me seek you in my desire,
Let me desire you in my seeking.
Let me find you by loving you,
Let me love you when I find you.*

- St. Anselm

Suggested music:

When I see you (Audrey Assad)