

30TH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

Jeremiah 31:7-9 Hebrews 5:1-6

Mark 10:46-52

HOMILY

On a day like this, preachers will be awash with all sorts of nice things about Bartimaeus, e.g.: a man who had more vision than those who could see or praising him as a model of Christian discipleship etc. Let us, however, take a different angle and put ourselves in the shoes of Bartimaeus and try to find out the ‘hardest thing’ he ever experienced in his life. For sure, the hardest thing he experienced in his life is not his blindness. It is neither the fact that people shouted and laughed at him. I can imagine that the hardest thing he experienced was that nobody ever knew his name. I think namelessness is what he suffered from most. Bartimaeus is not his name as we have heard from the Gospel: Bartimaeus means Son of Timaeus. Thank God St Mark in the Gospel of today at least calls him Bartimaeus but look at the other Gospels: Mathew drops the name Bartimaeus, and he simply becomes “*two blind men.*” In Luke he is simply referred to as “*a blind man.*” This is what it meant to be blind at the time of Jesus and indeed, for so many in our own times and may be even in our own community for that matter. How often do we stop at referring to people by their predicament rather than by their actual names? We need to become sensitive to how we refer to people.

At the same time let us look at how, ‘he who had no name of his own’ addressed the man who was passing by! Having heard the commotion, he shouted: “*Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me.*” He not only called Jesus by his name, but he included that ancient royal name: ‘Son of David.’ That is what Bartimaeus speaks out! This was the big truth about Jesus. That bothered many in the crowd and that’s why they tried to shut him up. Even good people, even pilgrims flocking to Jesus don’t seem to like to hear the truth. They do not like to hear truth named in detail. That’s why they resort to trying to shut him up. The way in which Bartimaeus addresses Jesus he surely has something he might want to say to us.

Two questions:

- ❖ Do we realize how hurting it is to keep people on the periphery by referring to them by their predicament?
- ❖ Do we get annoyed by people who spell out details about what we believe in?