

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, October 25, 2015

This email, entitled Looking to Sunday®, focuses on the Gospel Reading for the coming Sunday. It prepares readers to hear God's Word at Mass and it offers a point of reflection to consider in the days leading to Sunday. Looking to Sunday is written by Father Tom Iwanowski.

THE PERFECT RESPONSE

"What do you want me to do for you?" That was the question Jesus asked of Bartimaeus, the blind man, in this Sunday's Gospel (Mark 10:46-52).

Imagine for a moment that Jesus addressed that question to you. How would you respond? The question is more challenging and fraught with danger than we might imagine.

There is a story recounted of a man who was told by a heavenly messenger that he would be granted any request. The man responded that he wanted to live forever. His request was heard, but rather than bringing the man joy, it brought him pain and sorrow. As he went on living he had to watch those he loved grow old and die and leave him. He then had to form new relationships and that process repeated itself again and again. His endless life became a series of heartbreaking goodbyes.

Bartimaeus when asked by Jesus what he wanted replied, "Master, I want to see." That answer must have been the right one since it was preserved in the Gospel and has been spoken and preached about for some 2,000 years.

Jesus granted the request of Bartimaeus in all its fullness. Jesus opened the physical eyes of Bartimaeus so he could see the world around him. Jesus also opened the eyes of his soul and gave him spiritual insight. With that vision Bartimaeus saw more than just the face of Jesus, he saw his Lord. He truly saw the one he had addressed as the "Son of David."

Mark makes that clear in his Gospel by adding that after his eyes were opened, Bartimaeus immediately began to follow Jesus "on the way." It is interesting to note that the first Christians were called followers of the Way. (Acts 9:2) With opened eyes and spiritual insight, Bartimaeus became a disciple of Jesus.

The request made by Bartimaeus is the one we should be making as well. Imagine if our eyes could be opened so that we could see the presence and action of Jesus Christ in our world today. Imagine further if we could see ourselves, others, and situations the way that Jesus would see them.

The mistakes we make, the sins we commit, are often the result of our blindness. We see only what immediately attracts us and fail to see what is truly good and in keeping with our dignity as children of God. We see only what seems right at the moment and not the future implications of our words and actions or our inaction. We see the other person only as a stranger and not as a fellow child of God and part of our human family.

"What you do want me to do for you?" Bartimaeus gives us the perfect response. "Master, I want to see."