

[Readings: Jeremiah 31:7-9; Psalm 126; Hebrews 5:1-6; Mark 10:46-52]

Do you remember learning the Five Senses when you were in grade school? Hearing, seeing, smelling tasting and feeling. To lose any of our senses would be terrible. I think the worst sense to lose for me, would be the sense of sight. I am a very visual person. I like to look at things that delight the eyes. Certainly, looking at the sun shining through the autumn leaves in Michigan can leave us breathless at times.

Mark in today's Gospel, gives us the second story of a blind man healed of his blindness. The first miracle happens as Jesus leaves Jerusalem and begins His public ministry. Today's miracle happens as Jesus ends His three years of preaching, teaching and healing and He heads back home for what awaits Him.

Mark deliberately places these two miracles at the beginning and at the end of the public life of Jesus for a reason. He wants us to "see" and understand His Gospel message. "What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asks. "Master, I want to see." This is the simplest yet most profound request you or I or Bartimaeus can ask. "I want to see." I want to see not only with the eyes of my head, but with the eyes of my mind, with the eyes of my heart, with the eyes of my soul. I want to understand. I want to believe.

Isn't this what you and I hope to achieve in our lifetimes? The wisdom, the knowledge, the understanding of life and how to handle its problems and its blessings? To find my own identity, to know who I am and what God expects of me. This request is easy to make, and much more difficult to accept when Jesus gives us the profound answer: "Go on your way; your faith has saved you." It can also be translated, "Your faith has healed you." Which is easier to receive, healing or salvation? He asks for something much deeper than mere physical eyesight. We can imagine him saying, "Lord Jesus, give me sight. Let me see again. Let me see the way in front of me. Heal me of whatever it is that is keeping me from seeing."

This is what Jesus "sees" in the man's heart, in his very soul.

He looks you and me right in the eye when He asks, “What do YOU want me to do for YOU?” What DO you want Jesus to do for you today? Take a silent moment to think about that... Now imagine one of the crowd saying to you today, “Take courage; get up, Jesus is calling you.” What cloaks of encumbrance do we need to shed? What is keeping us from “springing up” to come to Jesus today?

Jeremiah, our prophet from today’s First Reading, knew first-hand how it was to follow the Lord, and what it would cost him. He would be mocked, threatened and assaulted by those who wished to silence him and the truth he preached. The author of the Letter to the Hebrews reminds us of what priests must go through each day “beset” with our own weakness, struggles and sin.

Today is World Mission Sunday. Three powerful words. “Sunday:” the Day of the Lord when we remember and we become what Jesus did for us. “Mission:” we gather to scatter, to go out to all the places where we live and work and pray and play, giving witness to others of our love for Jesus by meeting the spiritual, physical and mental needs of others. “World:” to remind ourselves that what we do is not just for A parish, AN archdiocese or A country.

On this World Mission Sunday, we recall what we often forget: That even today, missionaries around the world are tramping through forests and deserts and mountains of self-denial both near and far for the sake of the Gospel and in the name of the Church, sometimes even to the point of suffering and death.

The largest number of martyrs in this century in our troubled world are Christians and Christian missionaries. They do this on our behalf, and with the support of our prayers and our funds. Their “pain” is gain for everyone.

Our reflection questions for this week: What are we afraid of? Why are we unwilling to ask to see things more clearly in our lives? What relationship needs to be reformed? What personal issue or concern needs to be confronted? What will change our lives dramatically if we are only able to see through it more clearly? God wants to help us, and waits patiently for us only to ask. AMEN!