

30th Sunday in Ordinary Time: October 27, 2024.

“CHEER UP! ON YOUR FEET! JESUS IS CALLING YOU.”

Gospel of Mark 10:46-52: Blind Bartimaeus Receives His Sight

“Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (which means “son of Timaeus”), was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.” So they called to the blind man, “Cheer up! On your feet! He’s calling you.” Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. “What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus asked him. The blind man said, “Rabbi, I want to see.” “Go,” said Jesus, “your faith has healed you.” Immediately, he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.”

There is an old proverb: ***“Strike while the iron is hot”***. That proverb means that when the time is right, you have better act, or you will miss out on your opportunity. The metaphor is taken from a blacksmith working a piece of iron into shape. That piece of iron must be struck with the hammer while it is red-hot; if you wait too long, the iron will cool, and you won’t be able to mold it into shape.

Our Sunday Bible Story – Barty:

Jericho was only about 15 miles from Jerusalem. The main road ran right through Jericho. Jesus was on his way to the Passover. When a distinguished Rabbi or teacher was on such a journey, it was customary for him to be surrounded by a crowd of people, disciples, and others. Then, these people would listen to their Rabbi as he taught while they walked along. There were not many organized school systems as we have them today; this was one of the most common ways of moral and religious education at the time of Jesus.

It was the law that every male Jew over twelve living within 15 miles of Jerusalem attend the Passover. This law was impossible, and everyone couldn’t go. Those who couldn’t go were in the habit of lining the streets where groups of travelers must pass by. This allowed them to see some famous Rabbis and hear some of their teachings as they made their way along. So the streets of Jericho would be lined up with people, and there would have been even more people than usual because a great many would be there to catch a glimpse of this provocative young Galilean who everyone was talking about.

And as Jesus made His way through the throng teaching as He went. This will be the last time Jesus will pass that way, before the Cross. Bartimaeus (in this homily, I would prefer to call him ‘Barty’ for short), though blind, was no dummy. Barty figured that this would be a great place to score some cash. There was a big crowd; maybe they would be generous to a poor blind man. Suddenly, Barty hears the crowd's noise intensify, and he begins to ask the people around him ***“Who is that?” “What’s happening?” “Can you see what’s going on?”*** A compassionate bystander tells him, ***“Jesus is going by...wow, I wish you could see this”***. Barty had heard the stories. He had heard about this Man from Galilee. He had heard about the miracles. He had heard about the healings He performed. Barty had to strike while the iron was hot. He had to take advantage of this great opportunity.

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So he starts to shout, "Jesus, Jesus...hey, I'm over here! Help me, Help me!" The crowd around him yells back. "Shut up. We are trying to listen to the Master, but we can't hear what He is saying about you making all that racket." Instead of quieting down, Barty begins to yell all the louder JESUS, JESUS, HEY, I NEED HELP! JESUS! Jesus hears Barty and stops where he is. He tells the crowd, "**Bring that man to me.**" Now, suddenly, the crowd changes their tune. They tell him, "**Hey, Barty, you lucky guy, come on, Jesus wants to see you.**" Barty jumps up and is led to Jesus. Jesus says, "How can I help you." Barty says, "I want to be able to see." And Jesus heals him. Barty follows Jesus along, praising the Lord for what happened to him. Now healed and restored, Barty will rejoin his family and the community. For the first time, he will probably join us in celebrating the Passover feast in the Temple.

The role of the church

Friends, I would like us to look deeper at the crowd in this story. The crowd represents the attitude of the church. Sometimes, when we come across people with needs like Barty, they clamor for help. They want someone to point them to Jesus, but sometimes, we want them to be quiet because we don't want them to distract us from enjoying Jesus ourselves. But then, Jesus gets the crowd to focus on what is important. He tells them, "**Bring Barty to Me**". Suddenly, the crowd understands. Oh, we are supposed to be **ENCOURAGING** people to come to Jesus.

As dynamic disciples of Jesus Christ, St Pius X has five major characteristics—**WE BELIEVE, WE GROW, WE GATHER, WE LOVE, AND WE LEAD** others to abundant life in Jesus. So, how are we doing? Are we bringing people to Jesus? Or are we trying to silence them?

1. Friends, the iron is red hot; the time is right, right now! Jesus is right here!
2. There are people all around us with needs; are we bringing these people to Jesus?

Can I be brutally honest this morning?

- 1) How long has it been since you and I pointed someone to Jesus?
- 2) There is a lost world clamoring for help, even among our friends and family members.
- 3) Imagine what would have happened if Barty had not spoken up. If he just sat by and just listened to the teachings of Jesus? Had he paid attention to the crowd at first? Or said, "I don't want to stand out." People might judge me...?
- 4) We know what would have happened... that story would have ended differently.

Here we sit today. I'm sure some people will find this an ordinary day, no different than any other.

But let me tell you, today is special! Jesus is here today, teaching us, feeding us, healing us, and blessing us, just like He did many years ago, on the day Barty received his sight. Jesus Christ is here today – within us and on the altar **in the Eucharist**, and there are people out there who need Christ in their own lives, just like Barty. We are the hands and feet of Jesus. **Are you willing to help them?** Let us invite them to worship with us here at St Pius X Church.

Strike while the iron is hot. Don't miss out on this wonderful opportunity.

Come and let Jesus Christ touch your life.

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Let us Pray:

May the power of Jesus Christ gently touch us today, healing our minds and bodies. May the Holy Spirit enable us to bring others to Jesus Christ. Amen.

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