**Homily to Deacons, Candidates, and Wives**

**Annual Retreat 2018**

**30th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle B**

October 28, 2018

Jeremiah 31:7-9; Heb 5:1-6; Mark 10:46-52

“Master, I want to see!” (Mk 10: 51)

This was the cry of Bartimaeus. He wanted to see the “Master” who would then lead him in accomplishing God’s plan for him in his life. This cry, this outburst of faith from an utterly poor outcast of society followed the question Jesus put to him, “What do you want me to do for you?”

Does that question sound vaguely familiar? Indeed it should, for it was the same question we heard in last Sunday’s Gospel, the same question Jesus had put to James and John when they wanted the right and left seats in the kingdom.

James and John thought they had a plan and they were eager to accomplish it. They thought they knew the best way to advance their plan. They thought they would need power and influence to be successful, so they asked to sit on the right and left of Jesus in his kingdom.

Bartimaeus had an equally urgent plan. He wanted to see and to follow. He left all behind, casting aside his one possession in life, his cloak, the only thing he had to warm and shelter himself, in order to follow the plan of God for him in his life.

There is the contrast. Who do you resemble?

James and John desired power and influence to accomplish their plan. James and John wanted the right and the left, the places of honor. James and John told Jesus that they wanted him to do for them what they wanted, to accomplish their plan.

Bartimaeus wanted to see the Master and follow. Bartimaeus wanted to know his Master’s plan for him and make it his plan for life. Bartimaeus, blind though he was, saw more clearly than James and John the true nature of Jesus’ authority: to serve, not to be served.

When we develop a grand plan for our lives, we are tempted to James and John and not Bartimaeus, to be Caesar and not the carpenter’s son, to desire power and avoid crucifixion.

Like James and John, we snuggle up to powerful people or places of influence hoping to increase the chances of success, but we end up playing an exhausting game. We approach God with our plans and say, “God do what I want you to do for me. Make my plan your plan!”

We all reach a point in life when we admit, “God, I need your help; I need your guidance; I need your grace. I want to see!” At those moments, we begin to realize that our plans are limited and God’s plan is eternal, and we react, “Who me? You want me to do what? To live how in the realities of this world?” Ought we not, rather, pray, “Master, I want to see! I want to know your will for me. Teach me your way.”

The clearer we see the Master, the more we accomplish, the greater the mark we leave. The more we have the faith of Bartimaeus, the less we give in to our pride and the desire for power and prestige, the right and the left, and the more we hope and trust in the future. We all know how much the world and our Church needs an increase of faith and hope at this time!

The attitude of James and John is strong in us because it demands less of us. The humility of Bartimaeus requires great faith. But let us not fear! We can confidently approach the throne of grace, as Bartimaeus did, to receive all the help we need. We can trust God with our lives because he understands everything about us. Jesus has shown us the way. He was like us in all things but sin; he always did the will of his Father. His plan and the plan of the Father were one. He willing experienced everything we go through. Jesus now sits at the right hand of the Father, and he has reserved a spot for us there with him if we are obedient to his will for us in our lives.

Yes, Jesus already has gone ahead of us to prepare a place for us in heaven. Our spot is reserved! Will we occupy it? Will we accept it? Will we remember what Jesus has done for us when we are tempted to follow our own plans, when we are tempted to go our own way, when we are tempted to sin? Perhaps remembering that Jesus has experienced everything we will experience and has secured our spot in heaven if we are faithful to God, maybe remembering this will help us say no to sin, to those choices to go our own way, to go away from God.

When we face life’s challenges, may we not demand power or position. May we not snuggle up to the rich and powerful. May we ask God to make his plan known, ask God for his mercy and fill us with his grace so his will, not ours may be accomplished. May we fervently pray and beseech the Lord, “Master, I want to see!”