

I Want to See
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The conversation between Jesus and Bartimaeus is brief, but it is filled with meaning. Jesus asks, “What do you want me to do for you,” and Bartimaeus responds, “I want to see.” Jesus replies, “Go on your way; your faith has saved you.”

Bartimaeus is a beggar who has never seen. He is one of those people on the margins of society, one of those people of no account, one of those people to whom we pay no attention until they embarrass us by shouting out and asking us for something. Of course, Bartimaeus wants to see. He wants to see what everybody else sees. He wants to see the beauty of nature. He wants to see the world in which he lives. He wants to be like everyone else.

But at the end of this story there is a curious phrase that suggests Bartimaeus has received something more than physical sight. At the end of this story, Saint Mark writes, “Immediately he received his sight *and followed him on the way*. In other words, Bartimaeus follows Jesus on the way to Jerusalem; he follows Jesus in the way of discipleship. By the end of this story, then, it is clear that Bartimaeus not only sees the world about him, he sees what Jesus’ disciples have failed to see. He sees that Jesus must go to Jerusalem to suffer and die. And because he sees this, he follows Jesus on the way, in the way of discipleship.

Most of us think that we see clearly until our eyes are opened. We think we see and understand the world about us with twenty-twenty vision until someone points out that our vision is impaired. I remember when I put on my first pair of glasses. Before putting on those glasses, I thought my vision was perfect. But when I put those glasses on for the first time, I realized for the first time how poor my eyesight had been. I realized for the first time that I wasn’t seeing clearly.

Faith is like putting on a new pair of glasses. It allows us to see what we cannot see. It enables us to understand what we cannot understand. It empowers us to see ourselves and the world from God’s point of view. It enables to follow Jesus in the way of discipleship.

There are many people today who live their lives apart from faith. They see the world about them from a purely human vantage point. They understand the world in merely human terms. These people are not evil. In many instances, they are very good people. But they do not see the fullness of reality because they do not see the world in the light of faith. They do not see that God so loved the world that God sent his only begotten Son into the world. They do not understand that God has rescued them from the power of Sin and Death. They only see what is in front of their eyes, but they do not see the glory of God that bathes the world in which they live.

Lord, I want to see. I want to see with the understanding of faith. I want to see how you are always active and present to my life. I want to see the world and my life from your point of view, not merely from my own selfish point of view. But if we want to see in this way, we must believe. If we want to see in this way, we must entrust ourselves Christ. If we want to see in this way, we must follow in the way of discipleship.

These are difficult times for the church, difficult times to be Catholic. For some people, we are living in a moment of decline and shrinking numbers. But I see something different. I see God working in a way we do not yet understand. I see God purifying and strengthening the church. I see a moment when Catholicism will be stronger and more robust—not because of us but because of God’s grace. I see that God can do what we cannot do. I see God’s grace at work, and so I am not discouraged. I refuse to be pessimistic. For I choose to believe so that I can see. I choose to believe so that I can understand.

In a few moments we will receive the Eucharist and enter into the mystery of Christ’s death and resurrection. As we enter into the mystery, we ask for the grace to walk by faith and not by sight, “as we look *not* to what is seen but to what is unseen; for what is seen is transitory; what is unseen is eternal” (2 Cor. 4:18).