



A Word for Sunday

Father Albert Shamon

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Mark 10:46-52; (R1) Jeremiah 31:7-9; (R2) Hebrews 5:1-6.

The cure of the blind beggar Bartimaeus brings to a conclusion Mark's orderly account of Jesus' journey from Galilee to Jerusalem.

On that journey, Jesus predicted His passion three times. Three times, the disciples completely misread Him. Each time, Jesus corrected them and insisted that His disciples must follow the same road of the cross and service.

The last stop before reaching Jerusalem is Jericho, about 15 miles to the northeast of the city. Jericho was a spot where beggars frequently gathered, because it was through Jericho that most pilgrims would have to pass in order to get to Jerusalem for the great feasts. Pilgrims were God-fearing people, and thus likely to be generous.

Thus on this particular occasion, a blind beggar could be seen sitting on the roadside on the outskirts of Jericho. He must have become a renowned Christian later, for his name is remembered: Bartimaeus.

Hearing that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, he began to call out, "Jesus, Son of David (a Messianic title), have pity on me." People tried to silence him. As one writer put it, "There is never a knock at heaven's gate that is not heard in hell, and all the devils come out to silence it."

Bartimaeus, however, would not be silenced. As a stone thrown into a fast-flowing stream does not dam the onward rush of the waters, but only causes them to swirl around the stone more furiously, so as Bartimaeus shouted all the louder, the more the crowd tried to silence him.

Jesus heard, stopped, and called Bartimaeus over. "What do you want me to do for you?" He asked. It was the same question He had asked James and John. But Bartimaeus' request was so different from their selfish demands. Bartimaeus understood better than they that the authority of Jesus was to be used to serve. Unlike them, he was aware of his need and helplessness, and placed his only hope in Jesus, Son of David.

The cure of Bartimaeus is a parable of action. The apostles were blind; they could see as clearly as did blind

Bartimaeus. But, as Jesus gave sight to Bartimaeus, so He would remove the scales from the apostles' eyes in Jerusalem. There, they would see the Messiah suffer. There, their eyes would be opened. "If I be lifted up, I shall draw all to myself" — by the magnet of the cross.

A few reflections on Bartimaeus: St. Augustine once wrote that he did not fear the coming of Jesus, but only His passing by, since He might never come this way again. Actually, Jesus' journey to Jericho was the last time He ever did go there. Bartimaeus seemed to sense that, and he did not let the opportunity pass by. Jesus passes by every Sunday at Mass; He passes by in every homily, and in the sacraments. But the day of grace is not forever. Therefore, as Horace said, "Carpe diem" — seize the present moment. Now is the acceptable time. Act now!

The crowd tried to hush Bartimaeus. Misery makes a loud noise in the world, but the world is loath to hear it. And yet shouldn't we, so blessed, be willing to bear for awhile with those who have had to bear with misery for so long?

When Jesus called to the blind man, he had nothing to hinder him, like the possessions of the rich young man. For, being blind, he could not work, he could only beg. Bartimaeus was a pauper. Still, he flung aside the only thing that could possibly hinder his going to Jesus: a tattered cloak — a simple garment, no doubt, but indispensable to him. He would let nothing hinder his going to Jesus.

Another thing about Bartimaeus: he wanted to better his condition; he was fiercely alert.

After the cure, "he followed Jesus up the road." This could mean that he joined the crowd following Jesus. Yet there can be no doubt that Mark means Bartimaeus followed Jesus up the road of Christian discipleship.

Thus Mark offers the early disciples of Christ the encouraging example of this man. After being presented the difficult teachings on tolerance, divorce, riches, the cross and service, Mark's rallying call to his Christian readers on their way of discipleship is: "You have nothing whatever to fear from Him! He is calling you!"

On the Right Side

Father Paul J. Cuddy



To priests, deacons and others in pastoral care

Come Christmas, what gift of thanks to so many people who have been so helpful in our work for the Church? What gift that will be appreciated? What will be useful? What is within your pocketbook's reach?

I have 21 nieces and nephews, and 84 great-nieces and great-nephews, most of whom are now adults. I love them all, but what kind of Christmas gift could I give that would be both good and within my cash competence? Several years ago, I decided on gift subscriptions to the Catholic Digest, Our Sunday Visitor or My Daily Visitor.

Two letters of thanks to uncle I have prized. The first reads:

"Thank you for the subscription to Our Sunday Visitor. Our children go to CCD religious instruction, but the time is so limited, about 22 hours a year for religion! And the material so thin. The Visitor is a valuable supplement. More accurately, the CCD is a supplement to the Visitor. It keeps us informed and interested in the contemporary Church. Also we are mindful 52 times a year of our ancient uncle, when the postman brings the mail. We are proud that you have served our Lord and the Church these 50 years. May you continue in good health and devotion."

The second is delightfully breezy.

"Well, dear uncle, your Catholic Digest comes a dozen times a year, and each month is like receiving a big hug from our darling uncle. There is such variety in the Digest, and we all enjoy it. And it is a good reminder of yourself. Like your patron, St. Paul, you have always been an unrelenting evangelist. Now, lose some weight. We want to keep you around a little longer. Love ..."

Everyone agrees that the printed word helps to mold opinions and ideas, so I phoned the Rochester Rundel Library, which is always good about digging up information, and asked: "Could you give the paid circulation of the following?" Here are the results: Readers' Digest, 17,200,000; Playboy, 4,100,000;

Time 4,300,000; Newsweek 2,910,000. Of Catholic periodicals, the Knights of Columbus is first, with 1,400,000, followed by the Catholic Digest, 620,530; Our Sunday Visitor, 300,100. The National Catholic Register is 56,030, and the liberal National Catholic Reporter, which recently printed a 10,000-word article by Hans Kueng lambasting the Holy Father and Rome, is 47,000. Our own diocesan Courier-Journal is now over the 50,000 mark.

The Knights of Columbus' Columbia is superb. The editorials and letters to the editor are stimulating; the features on Rome, Washington, Women's Page, television and movie reviews, and a feature or two are consistently good. There are 1,400,000 members of the K of C, and each member receives a copy. I often wonder if the members realize the fine monthly they do receive. A few years ago, Our Sunday Visitor had a circulation of nearly a million, and was faithful to the Holy Father and the magisterial Church. Then they got a gung-ho liberal editor with a down-the-nose slant toward the Magisterial Church. I wrote to him: "If I wanted that type of weekly, I would get the (National Catholic) Reporter." He lasted around three years, and was replaced by a middle-of-the-road editor, but the circulation never quite recovered.

I send six Courier-Journal subscriptions to friends who have moved from the diocese, not at Christmas time, but during the year. One wrote: "The Courier is almost my only contact with the people of the diocese, and I look forward to it each week. Many thanks." Some magazines, e.g., the Catholic Digest and Our Sunday Visitor, give a special price for Christmas. Gift subscriptions may solve a gift problem for many. They will continue to do good throughout the year, and will keep you in happy mind from those who receive the gift.

Accessibility study continued from Page 5

Southwest: Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary; St. Augustine; St. Christopher; St. Helen; St. John, Spencerport; St. Jude; St. Monica; St. Pius the Tenth; St. Theodore; St. Vincent DePaul.

North: Christ the King; Annunciation; St. Andrew; St. Cecilia; St. Margaret Mary; St. Salome; St. Thomas the Apostle.

Northeast: Assumption; Resurrection; Holy Spirit; Holy Trinity; Our Lady of Mt. Carmel (portable); St. Ambrose; St. John of Rochester; St. Joseph, Penfield; St. Paul; St. Philip Neri; St. Rita.

Northwest: Holy Apostles; Holy Cross; Holy Name; Holy Rosary; Most Precious Blood; Our Lady of Mercy; Mother of Sorrows; St. Charles Borromeo; St. John, Greece; St. Lawrence; St. Leo; St. Mark.

Seating Arrangements

65 percent

A church was included if it had removed pews from an area to accommodate wheelchairs or had designated some other wide aisle or space where wheelchairs would not block access.

Southeast: Corpus Christi; Good Shepherd; Guardian Angels; Our Lady of Lourdes; Our Lady Queen of Peace; St. Boniface; St. Bridget; St. John, Humboldt St.; St. Mary; St. Paul of the Cross; St. Thomas More.

Southwest: Immaculate Conception; Nativity; Good Counsel; St. Christopher; St. Helen; St. John, Spencerport; St. Jude; St. Monica; St. Pius the Tenth; St. Theodore.

North: Christ the King; Annunciation; Our Lady of Perpetual Help; St. Andrew.

Northeast: Assumption; Resurrection; Holy Spirit; Holy Trinity; St. Ambrose; St.

John of Rochester; St. Joseph, Penfield; St. Paul; St. Philip Neri; St. Rita.

Northwest: Holy Apostles; Holy Cross; Holy Name; Holy Rosary; Most Precious Blood; Our Lady of Mercy; Mother of Sorrows; Sacred Heart; St. Charles Borromeo; St. Francis of Assisi; St. John, Greece; St. Lawrence; St. Leo; St. Mark; St. Michael.

Church bathrooms

13 percent

To be wheelchair-adapted, a stall must be at least 32 inches wide and must have a grab bar on both sides of the toilet.

Southeast: Our Lady Queen of Peace; St. Mary.

Southwest: Good Counsel.

North: Christ the King.

Northeast: Assumption; St. John of Rochester; St. Rita.

Northwest: Holy Cross; St. Mark.

Amplification System

14 percent

Southeast: Blessed Sacrament; Corpus Christi; Good Shepherd; Our Lady of Lourdes; St. Mary's.

Southwest: none.

North: none.

Northeast: Assumption; St. John of Rochester; St. Joseph, Penfield; St. Rita.

Northwest: Holy Family; St. Charles Borromeo.

Interpreter

13 percent

Some of these churches have an interpreter available, but do not provide that service regularly. St. Mary's Church of the Deaf does provide an interpreter for the hearing.

Southeast: Good Shepherd; St. Bridget; St. Louis; St. Mary's Church of the Deaf; St. Paul of the Cross.

Southwest: St. Christopher; St. Helen; St. Theodore.

North: none.

Northeast: Holy Spirit; St. Ambrose.

Northwest: St. Charles Borromeo.

Church hall entrance or ramp

29 percent

Southeast: Good Shepherd; Guardian Angels; St. Anne; St. Thomas More.

Southwest: St. John, Spencerport; St. Jude; St. Pius the Tenth.

North: Christ the King.

Northeast: Assumption; Resurrection; Holy Spirit; Our Lady of Mt. Carmel (ramp in progress); St. John of Rochester; St. Joseph, Penfield; St. Rita.

Northwest: Holy Name; Holy Rosary; Most Precious Blood; Our Lady of Mercy; St. John, Greece; St. Leo; St. Mark.

Church hall bathrooms

11 percent

Southeast: Our Lady Queen of Peace.

Southwest: St. John, Spencerport; St. Pius the Tenth.

North: none.

Northeast: Assumption; St. John of Rochester; St. Joseph, Penfield (in progress).

Northwest: Holy Rosary; St. John, Greece; St. Mark.

Special religious instruction

30 percent

Southeast: St. Catherine, Mendon; St. Louis; St. Mary's Church of the Deaf (for multi-handicapped people).

Southwest: Nativity; St. Christopher; St. Helen; St. Monica; St. Pius the Tenth; St. Vincent DePaul.

North: none.

Northeast: Assumption; St. Ambrose; St. John of Rochester; St. Rita.

Northwest: Holy Cross; Holy Rosary; Most Precious Blood; Mother of Sorrows; St. Anthony of Padua; St. Charles Borromeo; St. Francis of Assisi; St. John, Greece; St. Leo; St. Mark.

In the final two categories, those church facilities which are not accessible will be listed

Parking lot

13 percent not accessible

Surface smoothness and level of incline were considered between the parking area and the church.

Southeast: Our Lady of Victory; St. Bridget; St. Catherine, Mendon; St. Paul of the Cross.

Southwest: St. Mary of the Assumption.

North: St. Thomas the Apostle.

Northeast: none.

Northwest: St. Michael.

Walkways

18 percent not accessible

The smoothness of the surface and level of incline were considered, as well as whether there was a curb cut between parking lot and sidewalk.

Southeast: Our Lady of Victory; St. Bridget; St. Catherine, Mendon; St. Paul of the Cross.

Southwest: St. Peter and Paul.

North: St. Margaret Mary; St. Stanislaus; St. Theresa; St. Thomas the Apostle.

Northeast: St. Jerome.

Northwest: none.