

COLUMNISTS

Jesus still accessible, attentive, able

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

A man named Bartimaeus sat by the road begging. Poor Bartimaeus had no place to turn. There were no government programs to train the vision-impaired for jobs. There were no white cane or seeing-eye dog programs. Bartimaeus just sat by the side of the road begging for alms. How slowly the time must have passed; how meager must have been the alms. But Bartimaeus never gave up.

One day Jesus passed by. Hope danced for a moment in Bartimaeus' heart. He cried out, "Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me!"

Bystanders tried to silence him, but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Then Jesus stopped. What powerful words: "Jesus stopped." Jesus did not pass Bartimaeus by. Here's the first thing Bartimaeus found out about Jesus: Jesus is accessible.

It's quite staggering to think about. We don't have to fight our way through a battery of secretaries to reach our Lord. We don't have to journey on long pilgrimages. Christ is accessible.

Bartimaeus cried out and Jesus stopped and said, "Call him over." And they called the blind man over. Throwing aside his cloak, Bartimaeus jumped up



a word for sunday

BY FATHER ALBERT SHAMON

and came to Jesus.

Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?"

Bartimaeus learned a second thing about Jesus: Jesus is attentive. He cares about individuals. Jesus is not only Lord of the universe, he is the Lord of the sparrow. And he sees and he cares.

Businessman Max De Pree was in a hotel in Phoenix, Ariz., when his left knee gave out, and he was unable to walk. The hotel where he and Esther, his wife, were staying provided him with a wheelchair. Esther pushed him in his wheelchair to breakfast each day.

Each morning the hostess had looked at De Pree and asked politely the same question, "How many?" Then one morning she looked past De Pree to Esther and said politely, "How many?" Then as she led them into the dining room, she turned again to Esther and asked, "Would he like to sit at the window?"

It was as if Max De Pree had disappeared. In a twinkling, this polite young woman had stripped him of identity and position. It made De Pree realize that to be oppressed is wrong, but to be overlooked may be even worse. Jesus did not overlook Bartimaeus.

Jesus was attentive to Bartimaeus. He saw him, he sent for him, he sought to discern the great desire of his heart. Jesus' entire demeanor toward Bartimaeus was one of love and concern.

Jay Leno gained fame for his sharp wit. In his book *Leading with My Chin*, he writes about his deceased parents. In high school he had saved enough money to buy a raggedy, old pickup truck, and it became the apple of his eye. His parents, noting his pride in his truck, bought brand-new upholstery for it. One day he accidentally broke a window in the truck. He couldn't afford to fix it at that time.

In school one day, it rained heavily. Leno knew his upholstery would be ruined. As he looked out into the parking lot, he saw his parents drive in. His mother and father ran out with a big piece of plastic to cover the broken window. As Jay watched them, he realized they had left work, bought the plastic, covered the broken window because they knew how much the truck meant to their son. Jay Leno reports that he sat there in his classroom and cried. Leno's parents could have looked out the window and

said, "Isn't it a shame that Jay's window is broken," and left it at that. But they showed their love by going one step further.

Jesus too went that one step further. He asked Bartimaeus what he could do for him. And Bartimaeus learned a third thing about Jesus: Jesus is able. He was able to give Bartimaeus his sight.

What Bartimaeus learned are the things you and I need to remember, namely, that our Lord is accessible, our Lord is attentive, our Lord is able.

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Father Shamon is administrator of St. Isaac Jogues Chapel, Fleming.

Daily Readings

Monday, October 27

Romans 8:12-17; Luke 13:10-17

Tuesday, October 28

Ephesians 2:19-22; Luke 6:12-16

Wednesday, October 29

Romans 8:26-30; Luke 13:22-30

Thursday, October 30

Romans 8:31-39; Luke 13:31-35

Friday, October 31

Romans 9:1-5; Luke 14:1-6

Saturday, November 1

Revelation 7:2-4, 9-14; 1 John 3:1-3; Matthew 5:1-12a

Radio may be the future

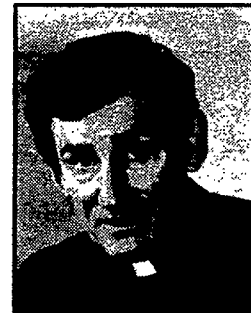
"We have discovered a new wrinkle in ministry which we call the 'pension phenomenon,'" a bishop from the eastern part of the United States observed.

"There are many more people than we realized who are pensioned and retired and in need of the church's service," he explained. "As a consequence, I've appointed a priest full time to learn where these people live and to minister to them."

This bishop is making every effort to reach out to his growing population of retired persons, many of whom are shut-ins.

He went on to tell me that one of his efforts consists in providing a TV program that includes daily Mass.

A week after our conversation I related this to a priest friend who told me: "That's a great idea. But, you know, dioceses shouldn't forget the radio. Most people, especially the elderly who can't see well, like to listen to the radio more than watch television. And too, if you can get out, you can always listen to the radio in the car."



the human side

BY FATHER EUGENE HEMRICK

As he said this, I wondered what some good radio programming might include. Four topics came to mind.

I think most elderly people, and even the young, would enjoy a radio program featuring church music. I am not talking about the hymns we sing at Mass, although they could be included. I am talking about classical church music. We have some magnificent polyphony and Gregorian chant.

The program could tap the music of other churches and religions as well, for

example the Anglican or Armenian churches with their rich interpretation of religious music, or the music of temple and synagogue.

I could envision each selection introduced by a commentator discussing its history and explaining what the composer was trying to accomplish.

Church music ranks among the world's finest, and as we have seen recently, one form of it, Gregorian chant, was rediscovered and became a big hit.

Another program I'd like to see is one on church history. Why church history? Because the elderly at this point are part of its history.

If church history was presented from this angle, I believe the elderly would enjoy hearing not only how the church progressed over the centuries, but also how the period they lived through was part of that progress.

A third possible topic is grandparenting. Most of our elders do a magnificent job of passing down their traditions to

those of us who are younger, as well as offering us their moral support. How about a program on outstanding grandparents who exemplify the millions of grandparents responsible for enriching our lives?

Finally, I would like to hear a program dramatizing the lives of the saints. When we advance in years, our thoughts are directed more frequently to God. It is a wonderful time to meet or rediscover those whose lives were exemplary in a variety of ways.

When I shared these ideas with a university president, he reminded me that keeping a radio program going five to seven days a week is a horrendous task. That's true, of course.

But it also is true that our church and its people have 2,000 years of rich tradition and grace, and a long history of working against the odds to reach out to people and respond to their needs.

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Father Hemrick is director of diocesan relations at the Catholic University of America.

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