

HOMILY FOR THE THIRTIETH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME  
Sunday, 27 October 2024

Fr. Jim Fredericks

Part One: the readings for the day  
Part Two: reflection on the readings  
Part Three: guidelines for *lectio divina*

PART ONE: READINGS FOR THE DAY  
Lectionary: 149

Reading I Jer 31:7-9

Thus says the LORD:  
Shout with joy for Jacob,  
exult at the head of the nations;  
proclaim your praise and say:  
The LORD has delivered his people,  
the remnant of Israel.  
Behold, I will bring them back  
from the land of the north;  
I will gather them from the ends of the world,  
with the blind and the lame in their midst,  
the mothers and those with child;  
they shall return as an immense throng.  
They departed in tears,  
but I will console them and guide them;  
I will lead them to brooks of water,  
on a level road, so that none shall stumble.  
For I am a father to Israel,  
Ephraim is my first-born.

Responsorial Psalm Ps 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6

R. The Lord has done great things for us;  
we are filled with joy.  
When the LORD brought back the captives of Zion,  
we were like men dreaming.  
Then our mouth was filled with laughter,  
and our tongue with rejoicing.  
R. The Lord has done great things for us;  
we are filled with joy.  
Then they said among the nations,  
"The LORD has done great things for them."  
The LORD has done great things for us;

we are glad indeed.  
R. The Lord has done great things for us;  
we are filled with joy.  
Restore our fortunes, O LORD,  
like the torrents in the southern desert.  
Those that sow in tears  
shall reap rejoicing.  
R. The Lord has done great things for us;  
we are filled with joy.  
Although they go forth weeping,  
carrying the seed to be sown,  
They shall come back rejoicing,  
carrying their sheaves.  
R. The Lord has done great things for us;  
we are filled with joy.

Reading II Heb 5:1-6

Brothers and sisters:  
Every high priest is taken from among men  
and made their representative before God,  
to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.  
He is able to deal patiently with the ignorant and erring,  
for he himself is beset by weakness  
and so, for this reason, must make sin offerings for himself  
as well as for the people.  
No one takes this honor upon himself  
but only when called by God,  
just as Aaron was.  
In the same way,  
it was not Christ who glorified himself  
in becoming high priest,  
but rather the one who said to him:  
*You are my son:  
this day I have begotten you;*  
just as he says in another place:  
*You are a priest forever  
according to the order of Melchizedek.*

Alleluia Cf. 2 Tm 1:10

R. Alleluia, alleluia.  
Our Savior Jesus Christ destroyed death  
and brought life to light through the Gospel.  
R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel Mk 10:46-52

As Jesus was leaving Jericho with his disciples  
and a sizable crowd,  
Bartimaeus, a blind man, the son of Timaeus,  
sat by the roadside begging.  
On hearing that it was Jesus of Nazareth,  
he began to cry out and say,  
"Jesus, son of David, have pity on me."  
And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent.  
But he kept calling out all the more,  
"Son of David, have pity on me."  
Jesus stopped and said, "Call him."  
So they called the blind man, saying to him,  
"Take courage; get up, Jesus is calling you."  
He threw aside his cloak, sprang up, and came to Jesus.  
Jesus said to him in reply,  
"What do you want me to do for you?"  
The blind man replied to him, "Master, I want to see."  
Jesus told him, "Go your way; your faith has saved you."  
Immediately he received his sight  
and followed him on the way.

PART TWO: HOMILY ON THE READINGS

Helen Keller may have been blind, but she was not without vision. Even in her blindness, she had a vision of what it means to be human, the goodness of the human person, and our responsibilities to one another. In one of her essays, she wrote,

The only thing worse than being blind is having  
sight but no vision.

I like this insight. She's saying that a person can be blind without being blinded to the suffering of others and their dignity as persons.

Helen Keller is also saying that it is possible to have perfectly good eyesight and still be blind. This is especially the case when it comes to seeing the plight of the poor all around us.

A family in our parish is being evicted from their apartment. They have three days to move out. More precisely, they have three days to move out of the little room in the little apartment that they occupy.

A family of four (mom, dad, and two boys) pays \$1000 a month for a small bedroom. Three other men, not related to the family, live in other rooms in the apartment.

The family doesn't have a rental agreement with the landlord. A woman has rented the apartment from the landlord and sublets the bedrooms to the family and the three other guys. They pay her for the bedrooms. Then she pays the landlord and pockets about \$1000 every month for herself.

Here in Sonoma, this is a way that people who are poor make money off people who are even poorer.

Of course, this living arrangement violates the rental agreement with the company that owns the apartment, to say nothing of Sonoma County's health code. The company has found out what's going on and, quite rightly, is evicting everybody, including the mom, the dad and the two boys.

They don't know where they are going to go. I'm concerned about the boys. Kids have enough to do without worrying about where they are going to live in three days.

The family's apartment is right behind the Sonoma Mission Inn and Spa. From their front door, you can look straight up and see the water tower. The spa has a high wall in the back. Guests at the Spa cannot see the apartment. They can't see the family that is being evicted either.

There is a kind of blindness here. Not a physical blindness - there is nothing wrong with our eyes. But, as Helen Keller said, there is a lack of vision.

In the Gospel for today's mass, a blind man, Bartimeus, sits on the roadway, begging. Hearing Jesus pass by, he calls out to him. Bartimeus must know something about Rabbi

Jesus. In fact, he must recognize that Jesus is the Messiah, because he calls out to him, saying,

Jesus, son of David, have pity on me

People rebuke the blind man, telling him to be silent. But Bartimeus persists. Eventually the people tell Bartimeus to take courage, for

Jesus is calling you.

Then comes what, in my opinion, is the most important part of the whole story of the encounter between Jesus and Bartimeus.

Jesus can see that Bartimeus is blind. The beggar, after all, is now standing right before him. And Jesus must know what this man wants above all things. And yet, Jesus asks blind Bartimeus, a perfectly simple question.

What do you want me to do for you?

This is a great question. It's a question I used to ask my students from time to time. It's a question that is harder to answer than it seems at first because it's a clarifying question: tell me right now what it is that you *really* want. It's a question I ask myself from time to time as well.

My eyesight is not 20x20 anymore, but it's good enough for the DMV. Even still, when I find myself standing before the Savior and he asks me what he asked Bartimeus, I pray that I be given the grace to say what Bartimeus said,

Master, I want to see.

I pray that we all be given the grace to say this, because, here in Sonoma, seeing families that are poor and exploited and being evicted can be difficult. This is not because we are blind. It's because we suffer from a lack of vision, like Helen Keller said.

Here in Sonoma, the poor are hidden from plain sight right under the water tower of the Sonoma Mission Inn and Spa.

But also, here in Sonoma, our Lord and Savior is standing right before us asking,

What do you want me to do for you?

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Helen Keller era completamente ciega. Pero no carecía de visión. Aunque sea ciega, tuvo esa mujer una visión de lo que significa ser humano, la bondad de la persona humana y nuestras responsabilidades hacia los demás. En uno de sus ensayos, escribió:

Lo peor que ser ciego es tener vista pero no ver.

Me gusta esta idea. Ella dice que una persona puede ser ciega sin estar ciega al sufrimiento de los demás y a su dignidad como personas.

Helen Keller también dice que es posible tener una vista perfectamente buena y aún así ser ciego. Esto es especialmente cierto cuando se trata de ver la difícil situación de los pobres que nos rodean.

Una familia de nuestra parroquia está siendo desalojada de su apartamento. Tienen tres días para salir. Más precisamente, tienen tres días para salir de la pequeña cuarto del pequeño apartamento que ocupan.

Una familia de cuatro (mamá, papá y dos niños) paga \$1000 al mes por un dormitorio pequeño. En otras habitaciones del apartamento viven otros tres hombres que no tienen relación con la familia.

La familia no tiene contrato de alquiler con el propietario. Una mujer ha alquilado el apartamento al propietario y subarrenda las habitaciones a la familia y a los otros tres hombres. Ellos le pagan por sus cuartos. Luego ella paga al propietario y se embolsa unos 1000 dólares al mes para ella.

Aquí en Sonoma, esta es una forma en que la gente pobre gana dinero a costa de gente que es aún más pobre.

Por supuesto, este tipo de vivienda viola el contrato de alquiler con la empresa propietaria del apartamento. También es violación del código sanitario del condado de Sonoma. La empresa ha descubierto lo que está pasando y, con toda la razón, está desalojando a todos, incluidos la madre, el padre y los dos niños.

No saben adónde van a ir. Estoy preocupada por los niños. Los niños ya tienen bastante con lo que hacer sin preocuparse de dónde van a vivir en tres días.

El apartamento de la familia está justo detrás del Sonoma Mission Inn and Spa. Desde la puerta de entrada se puede mirar hacia arriba y ver la torre de agua de la spa. El spa tiene un muro alto en la parte trasera. Los huéspedes del spa no pueden ver el apartamento. Tampoco pueden ver a la familia que está siendo desalojada.

Hay una especie de ceguera. No es una ceguera física, no hay nada malo con nuestros ojos. Pero, como dijo Helen Keller, hay una falta de visión.

En el Evangelio de la misa de hoy, un ciego, Bartimeo, está sentado en la calle, pidiendo limosna. Al oír pasar a Jesús, lo llama. Bartimeo debe saber algo sobre el Rabino Jesús. De hecho, debe reconocer que Jesús es el Mesías, porque lo llama y le dice:

¡Jesús, hijo de David, ten compasión de mí!

La gente reprende al ciego, diciéndole que se calle. Pero Bartimeo insiste. Al final, la gente le dice a Bartimeo,

¡Ánimo! Levántate, porque él te llama”

Luego viene lo que, en mi opinión, es la parte más importante de toda la historia del encuentro entre Jesús y Bartimeo.

Jesús puede ver que Bartimeo es ciego. Después de todo, el mendigo está ahora de pie justo delante de él. Y Jesús debe saber lo que este hombre quiere por encima de todas las cosas. Y, sin embargo, Jesús le hace al ciego Bartimeo una pregunta perfectamente simple.

¿Qué quieres que haga por ti?

Esta es una pregunta fina. Es una pregunta que era me costumbre hacer a mis estudiantes de vez en cuando. Pero es una pregunta que es difícil de responder porque es una pregunta clarificadora: dime ahora mismo qué es lo que realmente quieres. Es una pregunta que también me hago a mí mismo de vez en cuando.

Mi vista ya no es de 20x20, pero es lo suficientemente buena para el DMV. Aun así, cuando me encuentro de pie ante el Salvador y él me pregunta lo que le preguntó a Bartimeo, oro para que se me conceda la gracia de decir lo que dijo Bartimeo:

Maestro, que pueda ver.

Oro para que todos tengamos la gracia de decir esto, porque, aquí en Sonoma, ver a familias pobres y marginalizados y que están siendo desalojadas puede ser difícil. Esto no porque estamos ciegos. Es porque sufrimos de falta de visión, como dijo Helen Keller.

Aquí en Sonoma, los pobres están ocultos a la vista de todos, debajo de la torre de agua del Sonoma Mission Inn and Spa. Pero también, aquí en Sonoma, nuestro Señor y Salvador está de pie frente a nosotros y nos pregunta:

¿Qué quieres que haga por ti?

### PART THREE: INSTRUCTIONS FOR *LECTIO DIVINA*

I suggest that you use the readings and my reflections as an opportunity for practicing *lectio divina* ("divine reading"). This is an ancient spiritual practice that started with the great monks in the Syrian and Egyptian desert back in the early days of the Church. It is really quite simple.

Step one: calm your mind (my Buddhist friends describe the mind as "a mango-tree full of chattering monkeys"). I find that paying attention to your breath for a few minutes is a practical and effective way to do this.



Step two: read the readings slowly and attentively. Savor the words as if you were tasting a great Pinot Noir. Don't rush. You are not looking for information or instructions. You are making friends with a sacred text which will bless you abundantly if you will only open your heart to it and let it speak to you. In *lectio divina*, we are not actually "reading" the Bible. Rather, we are "listening" to the Bible as the sacred words speak to us.

Step three: repeat step two.

Step four: read the homily on the readings.

Step five: Ask yourself a few questions:

- What particular words in the readings call out to me most forcefully?
- What is going on in my life such that these words call to me so forthrightly?
- How am I being asked to change, both interiorly and exteriorly?
- In light of this *lectio divina*, how am I being invited to be of service to the world today?