

Blind Bartimaeus and Our Approach to the Faith

The Catholic Church alone has all the gifts that Christ wishes to impart to his people. However, in order to receive these gifts properly, we must possess the proper dispositions. An integral aspect of OCIA is developing these dispositions. We will spend some time discussing these dispositions and why they are important beginning with the Healing of Blind Bartimaeus.

The Healing of Blind Bartimaeus

"⁴⁶ And they came to Jericho; and as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great multitude, Bartimae'us, a blind beggar, the son of Timae'us, was sitting by the roadside. ⁴⁷ And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁸ And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁹ And Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart; rise, he is calling you." ⁵⁰ And throwing off his mantle he sprang up and came to Jesus. ⁵¹ And Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" And the blind man said to him, "Master,^[a] let me receive my sight." ⁵² And Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight and followed him on the way." (Mark 10:46-52)



In the Old Testament, the inhabitants of Jericho were known to be wicked. Thus, we find blind Bartimaeus just outside a city of sin. Notice that Bartimaeus hears about the presence of Jesus. We too hear the Gospel preached to us. This evokes his bold response where he begs Jesus for his mercy with persistence. This is the approach to the faith that all of us should have from now until the day we die. No matter where we are at in our lives, we must always approach the Lord as beggars. It is only when we empty ourselves that we can receive all that God wishes to give us. In Mark's Gospel, Jesus is always on the move. However, he stopped for Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, because of his faith, humility, and persistence. After this, Bartimaeus is called, and he throws off his mantle. He is throwing off his old self completely which allows him to "spring up". When Jesus asks Bartimaeus what he desires, he wishes to see. All of us are spiritually blind. No matter how much we know, we remain spiritually blind. When we acknowledge our blindness and approach Christ in faith as beggars, He will stop and grant us the sight needed to follow him to Calvary.

"Thus says the LORD:
Heaven is my throne
and the earth is my footstool;
what is the house which you would build for me,
and what is the place of my rest?
² All these things my hand has made,
and so all these things are mine,
says the LORD.
But this is the man to whom I will look,
he that is humble and contrite in spirit,
and trembles at my word." (Isaiah 66:1-2)