**Readings for October 27, 2024 – 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

‘Come and See Jesus’

*When we recognize that the Lord is constantly doing “great things for us” we know we can approach Jesus with confidence, and ask him for what we want. Jesus wants us to see him and know him. Jesus wants to help us discover our desires. He wants us to be healed.*

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**Opening Prayer:** Lord, help us to see you with eyes of complete trust in your care and concern for us. Teach my heart this day where and how to see you. Open us up to your healing touch and your abundant goodness that’s all around us. Amen.

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Reading I [**Jer 31:7-9**](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/jeremiah/31?7)

   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**](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/psalms/126?1)

**R. (3)    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**](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/hebrews/5?1)

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.*

*(Note: Scripture tells us that Aaron, a Levite priest, was the brother of Moses, and that God called Aaron to serve as an assistant and prophet. Aaron helped Moses in leading the people out of slavery in Egypt. Moses felt he was not a good speaker, so God sent Aaron to help. - Exodus 4:10-17; 7:1).*

Gospel [**Mk 10:46-52**](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/mark/10?46)

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.

Related Reflections

**We are all healers:** Jesus did a lot of healing during his life, but healing was never his sole focus.  In fact, he almost always healed in order make a different point. The point was to lift up the faith of another.  Or to show people what the kingdom of God might look like here on earth.  Or to offer compassion to someone who had reached out to him. Yes, I think Jesus might laugh at us calling him, “Jesus the Healer.”

That being said, Jesus did heal.  He made blind people see.  He made lame people walk.  In the story of the paralyzed man and his friends, he is teaching in a home in Capernaum. He has become so popular that crowds are packed in to hear him. The house is full, the entrance is full, people are spilling out around the house. There is no more room for anyone.

A group of four people decide they want to bring their friend – who is paralyzed – to see Jesus. But they can’t get in!  It’s too crowded. Rather than giving up and going home, however, they decide to make a hole in the roof. I can just imagine little bits of rocks and dust falling down on the people who are inside. I can picture them looking up as a hole starts to open in the roof above them. And then … a man lying on a mat gets lowered down through that hole!  And then … Jesus heals him, telling him to stand up and take up his mat. Cool story, right?

However, did you notice that my retelling left out a whole chunk of the story? Remember, Jesus didn’t heal just to heal … he healed to make a point. When the man first gets lowered through the roof, Jesus doesn’t heal him immediately.  Instead, Jesus forgives his sins. That certainly does not make some of the scribes in attendance very happy. For they strongly believed that only God had the power to forgive sins – no one else. When Jesus tells the man, “Your sins are forgiven,” he is basically telling him, “It is God whom you approach.” Here Jesus reveals his true identity as the Son of God.

In daring to forgive the man’s sins, Jesus is also disrupting the economic and power structure of the time. Usually, people had to go to the temple and offer some of their meager resources in order to receive forgiveness.

Other healing stories in the Gospels are similar. Jesus was always pointing to the kingdom of God – always teaching about what God’s kingdom could look like here on earth. If a healing helped to get that message across, great.

In fact, as author Megan McKenna writes, Jesus’ reputation as a healer actually hindered his ministry.  “His reputation as a miracle worker dogs him - it seems to handicap him when he wishes to preach about God’s kingdom because the good news he shares does not necessarily save one from suffering or death. No amount of Jesus’ healing is going to exempt people from experiencing pain or enduring suffering: to believe otherwise is dangerous foolishness.”

How often have we fallen into that trap? Jesus healed so many people … why isn’t my mom, my friend, my co-worker, myself experiencing healing? Why is the cancer getting worse, why won’t the migraines stop, why does the mental illness persist … where is my healing from Jesus?  McKenna would say if we’re focusing only on physical healing, we’re focusing on the wrong thing. Jesus never promised physical healing, just as he never promised a life free from persecution or hatred or suffering. In fact, he went out of his way to explain how hard the life of a disciple would be.

So why did Jesus heal people? McKenna writes, “Jesus’ intent seems to be to go beyond physical healing to radically alter people’s lives so they will live more humanly and gracefully, following a new authority and power in the world.” Notice that McKenna specifically highlights Jesus’ going beyond physical healing to healing people’s lives. That is an important distinction. The difference between curing – which is often what we think of when we think of physical healing - and a more all-encompassing idea of healing. I would guess that Jesus might actually like the title, Jesus the Healer, as long as we are talking about healing in this broad and expansive way – healing people to live more humanly and gracefully.

How might we think about the difference between healing and curing?  In her book, “Jesus Freak,” Sara Miles explains it like this – “Jesus calls his disciples, giving us authority to heal and sending us out.

He doesn’t show us how to make a blind man see, dry every tear, or even drive out all kinds of demons. But he does show us how to enter into a way of life in which the broken and sick pieces are held in love, and given meaning. In which strangers literally touch each other, and in doing so make a community spacious enough for everyone.”

What does that look like in our world today? Author Rachel Held Evans tells a story about Thistle Farms, an organization in Nashville that trains and employs women recovering from abuse, prostitution, addiction, imprisonment, and life on the streets. As the women heal through the therapy and community offered by the program, they offer healing to others through the aromatic bath and body products they make from essential oils. At Thistle Farms, healing smells like lavender, tea tree, peppermint, and vanilla. It feels like lotion and body balm massaged into the skin.

When Jesus began his public ministry, he quoted from the prophet Isaiah(**Isaiah 61:1-4)**. “The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; God has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to comfort all who mourn …” That is the healing that was most important to Jesus. And that is the healing we are also called to do. Jesus healed in so many ways – and so can we.

- Bethany Nelson, https://www.wpctiburon.org/communications/sermon-archives/we-are-all-healers/

*(Note: I highly recommend books by the two authors mentioned in this reflection – Megan McKenna and Rachel Held Evans – Rita Zyber).*

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**What do you feed your eyes?**

What we feed our eyes will eventually rule our hearts. And I’m not just talking about pornography.

Jesus says, “The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!” ([Matthew 6:22–23](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%206.22%E2%80%9323); [Luke 11:34](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke%2011.34)).

Yes, our eyes will be drawn to what our hearts desire, but they also often hold sway. Our eyes are not neutral. They influence and even drive our hearts. If we feed them what is true, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable, our eyes can grow our faith, heighten our love, and intensify our happiness. But where the eyes wander, the heart quickly follows — and falls. How many of us leave our eyes on too long a leash?

For some, tragically, it is pornography. For others, it’s something less salacious, like sports scores or news headlines. For others, Instagram or Facebook. For still others, it’s Amazon or Target, YouTube or Netflix. Just because something isn’t inherently bad, doesn’t mean it can’t fill our eyes so full as to crowd out the one who matters most. That’s what darkened eyes are: eyes so full of something other than Christ that they can no longer see him and enjoy him.

If you have let your eyes get out of shape, it’s not too late to learn to guard them and keep them healthy. First, fill your eyes with the words of God. If you want to make sure there is room for God, let him in first. Before you’re exposed to everything else you will see today, decide to see him. Let a fresh vision of him in his word be the day’s first wonder, the sun that eclipses and illumines every other beauty. Steep your soul in Scripture long enough that you begin to see God in all the other wonders around you.

Also, compare your prayer life with your screen life. When we set the time we spend on our phones, or in front of televisions, next to the time we spend on our knees, what do we learn about our eyes and our hearts? The decisive concern here is not with the time spent, but with the commitment, passion, and affection we exert.

The warnings from Jesus are not meant to limit what we see, but to focus and expand what we see. They want us to see more, to have healthy eyes wide open for God.

* Marshall Segal – desiringGod.org

**What do you wish to see?** The list is long, at least for me. I’ve always wanted to see the Mona Lisa, but I have – and I’m not even kidding – a bad habit of ending up in Paris on Tuesdays, when the Louvre is closed. I always wanted to see the great Canadian rock band, Rush, live in concert. As they toured constantly, it seemed like I’d always have the chance. Until they stopped, and now the chance is gone.

What would I like to see? Oh, my. How about a sunset over Mission Lake at my childhood Bible camp. Hank Aaron in his prime. World peace. My mother’s smile, just one more time. But more than anything, I wish to see Jesus. We wish to see Jesus, but where and when does he show himself to us?

During Lent we have the mountaintop moment of Transfiguration. Holy Week begins with the hopeful, joyful acclamations of Palm Sunday. And both of these moments reveal much that we need to know about Jesus – his divinity, his kingship. But if we want to see Jesus in his glory, we must look to the most surprising places. To the cross, and to the earth into which the dead seed is cast.

We may want to see Jesus on our terms and timetable, fitting him into our life. But where we will truly see Jesus is where we most truly need him. We will see him in our mortality and brokenness. Jesus knows the suffering and sorrow of this world, and here we truly come to see and know Jesus.

Christian justice advocate Danielle Strickland tells of her time in Rwanda, learning about the reconciliation process through which the nation is putting itself back together after being ripped apart by genocide thirty years ago. Strickland sat with a Tutsi woman whose family had been killed, and with a Hutu man who had participated in those killings.

They spoke of how they were rebuilding their lives in the same village, not as enemies but as partners in a peace that could make something new after all the horrors. New life emerging where there had seemed to be only death. Strickland sat with them and listened to their story. Finally, Strickland had to ask: How can you do this work together? To which the woman responded, “Oh. Do you not know Jesus?”

Do you not know Jesus? The One lifted high upon the cross to drive out the ruler of this world, whose arms open wide in love draw all into the divine embrace? He is here, today.

Giving himself to you in bread, wine, and Word. The prophetic promise of Jeremiah is fulfilled in Jesus. No longer can our sin or any situation keep the divine at arm’s length. God is here, authoring a new covenant, a new promise written on our hearts.

Cast into the ground, the seemingly-dead seed bears much fruit. For you, and in your life. May your life be transformed as Christ comes into your presence today. Friends, no longer do you not know Jesus. The hour has come. God’s commandment of love has been written on your hearts. Jesus’ arms open wide in embrace of the whole world, so loved by God. Out of death, life. **Come and see Jesus.** Lose your old life and take up the new one freely given you for Jesus’ sake.

We will not see him on our terms. Rather, he shows himself to us when and where we need him most. Come to the cross and see the glory of our God. Amen.

* Pastor Dave Lyle, from a sermon preached at Grace Lutheran Church (River Forest, IL) on March 17, 2024

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| **The Movements of Identity:** As I prayed through today’s Gospel passage using my imaginative senses in an Ignatian contemplation, I became very curious about how Bartimaeus may have experienced a shifting sense of identity throughout his encounter with Jesus. Trusting in the work of the Holy Spirit to guide my prayer, here is what I noticed as I “became” Bartimaeus:1. I am a beggar. I am blind. I beg for my survival in the same location day after day and it’s as though people no longer see me. I must be invisible. Although I am the one who is blind, I long to be seen.
2. I am called. I hear the commotion of the crowd accompanying Jesus of Nazareth. I call out to him for mercy. People tell me to be quiet, wanting to keep me invisible. But Jesus becomes still. He heard the specificity of my longing. Although I am the one crying out, Jesus calls me to him.
3. I am known. I can hardly believe Jesus has called me to him! He is the famous healer. I’m going to receive my sight! Lord, have mercy! But when I reach Jesus, he asks me a question. Although I am the one who knows of him, Jesus takes the time to get to know me.
4. I am affirmed and I am sent. Jesus sees me. He affirms my existence, the particularity of my longing, and my faith. Jesus affirms me as I am and I am made well. Jesus tells me to, “Go,” and I know he wants me to live my life anew. Although I am the one who was in lack, Jesus affirms my wholeness.

I must follow This Man. Won’t you follow him too?  *—Laura Gilmartin Hancock, published on Ignatianprayer.org***What do you want?**When Jesus calls Bartimaeus to himself, he gives Bartimaeus a small period of time to consider what he *really*wants, before Jesus asks him. And then the presence of the Lord and that question serve as acall to Bartimaeus to commit himself to just one heart’s-desire. And Bartimaeus finds it: *I want to see.* Seeing isn’t limited to seeing the blue of the sky or the road to home. It is also a matter of seeing the truth about things, or even of seeing The Truth himself. And so Jesus gives Bartimaeus all that he asks for. Bartimaeus sees not only the world around him, but also his Lord.  *-Eleonore Stump, St. Louis University* |   |
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Discussion Questions

In the second reading, St. Paul reminds us that baptism makes all of us ministers in the reign of God. Think about Moses, Dorothy Day, Blessed Rutilio Grande, Blessed Damien, St. Oscar Romero, and others. Pick one or two and say how their weakness helped make them good ministers. (Or maybe talk about yourself, or someone else you know who may have done great things despite a certain weakness).

Talk a little about the idea of healing v. curing (in the first reflection). What does healing and wholeness (the kind Jesus wants) mean for us?

Have you ever received a gift from our Heavenly Father perfectly suited to your needs that you did not ask for or deserve?

What things in our life (external obstacles, or even internal voices) keep us from knowing what we truly want from Jesus?

What can we do to help remove the obstacles and have greater sight (clarity)?

Do you think Jesus’ human experience and suffering draws people to him? In what ways?

***Closing prayer:***

*Spirit of Christ, we call out to you.
We call out to you
in our need and with our deepest longings.*

*Thank you for hearing us, for calling us, for knowing us.
Help us to receive the affirmation of our wholeness
as coming from you.*

*Spirit of Christ, may we be made well
and follow you. Amen.*

*—Laura Gilmartin Hancock - From ignatianprayer.org*

**Also:** Lord, I pray for vision for my life. I pray that you would speak to me personally, so that my vision would align with yours. I pray that you would reveal and confirm the plans you have for me. I thank you that you want to speak to me and I commit to walking out your vision for my life.

***Our Weekly Focus Thought (adapted from Pope Francis)***

“To enter into the Kingdom of Heaven we must allow ourselves to be astonished.”

*How was I astonished this week?*

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***Other thoughts for the coming week***

**Meditation:** Jesus opened the eyes of the blind man, who had great trust in Jesus’ divine power. Take a few minutes to think back on your day, or the past couple of days. Ask yourself, “Where did I see Jesus?” What were the circumstances or people who helped me to see this?

Where did I seem blind to what was around me?

What might I remove from my eyes (or from my life) in order to see God more clearly?

**Prayer:**

Grant me, O Lord, to see everything now with new eyes,
to discern and test the spirits that help me read the signs of the times,
to relish the things that are yours, and to communicate them to others.
Give me the clarity of understanding that you gave Ignatius. *-- Personal prayer of Pedro Arrupe, S.J.*