

October 27, 2024



Photo by Sr. Karin Nürnberg, CSJ, from the Abbey St. Hildegard in Eibingen, Germany

AMAZING GRACE

By Julie Mussché

Today's Gospel

*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.*

MARK 10:46-52

Reflection

Today's Gospel reading beautifully portrays the power of faith and persistent hope. "Jesus, son of David, have pity on me" is a riveting supplication. Despite being rebuked and dismissed as unworthy, Bartimaeus perseveres in pursuit of healing. Once Jesus acknowledges and invites him over, the crowd turns to support Bartimaeus in his quest.

Reflecting on this stirring scripture passage, I have to wonder if there was more than one miracle revealed. The most obvious of course is Bartimaeus's wondrous healing. Less conspicuous might be the curing of another type of blindness: bias or exclusion of another because of difference or station in life. Jesus with his statement, "Call him," affirmatively broadens the tent.

Blindness, a lack of or diminishment of vision, has been interpreted symbolically as an inability to see truth or reality. In today's reading it seems some were blind to the humanity and value of someone marginalized societally because of disability or being different. In the time of Jesus, disability had profound implications communally and could be interpreted as the "stain" of generational sin. Maybe I am reading too much into this passage, and at the same time, there is much to be said for the faith and fortitude of Bartimaeus in the face of social resistance.

While reflecting on the passage, the hymn "Amazing Grace" rolled around my soul. Searching out the lyrics, I had forgotten the story of the author, John Newton. Capturing the essence of his metanoia, transforming from a slave trader to an abolitionist as he gradually converted to Christianity and eventually became a minister, the song resonates the invitation from Jesus, "Call him."



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For Pondering

- What is the range of blindness of our times?
 - What are you called to see with the clarity of God's truth?
 - How are you prompted to ask, "Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me?"
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For Prayer

There are many versions of “Amazing Grace” to savor. An invitation: find a version you like and spend some time praying with and reflecting on “Amazing Grace.”

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