

HOMILY ~ 30th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME OCTOBER 26/27, 2024

In South Africa, there is a standard greeting in Zulu language, “*Sawubona*” that is translated as, “*I see you.*” That is much different from our standard greeting of, “*Hello,*” that is very impersonal. It acknowledges that someone is there, but not much beyond that. The greeting, “*I see you*” is much more personal. It is not just that someone is there, but I see you as you are. It is much more personal.

In the Gospel Reading, we encounter Bartimaeus, who is blind; but he sees Jesus, as he is, which shows great spiritual sight. That was a huge insight, particularly at that time when very few people knew that. He calls Jesus, “*Son of David,*” which indicates that he knows that Jesus is the Messiah. He could greet Jesus with, “*Sawubona.*” Jesus asks him, “*What do you want me to do for you?*” Bartimaeus was asking for the impossible, to have his vision restored; because he knew Jesus was God. He got what he asked for. His whole world changed that day. He went from a lifetime of begging on the roadside to becoming a Disciple of Jesus. A new world opened up to him.

Most of us here have had our sight all of our lives, but when we look at Jesus, do we see who he truly is? Can we greet Jesus with, “*Sawubona?*” When you look at Jesus, do you see that he is God? If Jesus were to ask you today, “*What do you want me to do for you?*” how would you respond? Would you be like Bartimaeus and ask for something seemingly impossible?

I have done that at times, and sometimes I even get what I ask for. When it becomes evident to me that I am not going to get what I asked for, because I know Jesus is God; I start asking him to reveal to me what he is calling me to do. Sometimes I get that I just need to hold tight for a while. Sometimes things are just not in place yet for me to move forward. Sometimes an opportunity comes that I never expected, and that is what I am supposed to do. More and more, rather than ask God for something specifically, I ask God to show me his will. I see him as God, and I know he has a bigger picture than I have. Sometimes I am amazed at how he works things out for me.

When we look at ourselves, do we see who we truly are? Can we say, “*Sawubona*” to ourselves? Sometimes we are on automatic pilot and just continue to do what we have always done. Sometimes it made sense when we started doing it, but it does not make sense anymore. We like to stay in our comfort zone; but Jesus is frequently calling us out of our comfort zone, as he did with Bartimaeus. Different things make sense in different seasons of our lives. Certainly we need to make changes during transition times in our lives like when we get married, when we have children, when we become empty nesters, when we become widows or widowers, when we retire, just to name a few. We need to find a new normal at all of these transitions. Jesus can help with that.

Sometimes we need to have a look at our individual conscience formation. It is one thing to know the rules, it is one thing to know what you should do and it is something very important to incorporate them into our lives in a meaningful way. When you look at yourself, are you becoming the moral person you are called to be, that you want to be? Sometimes we just kind of go along with the crowd. We use the excuse that everyone is doing it. What did your mother tell you about that? What do you think God will think if you tell him that? Moral blindness lets us hurt others, take from others, misrepresent the facts to others, slander people’s names without regret. Take a good look at yourself. Are you the moral person you want to be? Jesus can help with that.

Hopefully, we can develop the spiritual sight that Bartimaeus had. Hopefully, we can see Jesus as he is. Hopefully, we can see ourselves as we are. Can we say, “*Sawubona*” to Jesus and to ourselves? Answer Jesus’ question, “*What do you want me to do for you?*”

Love and Peace,

Fr. Jim