

THIRTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

LECTIONARY # 149

READING I Jeremiah 31:7-9

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah

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.

Jeremiah = jayr-uh-MI-uh

The opening lines ring out joy: shout, exult,

and praise. Let your countenance be one of

happiness.

exult = ehg-ZUHLT

Pause slightly after "Israel" to introduce how

he will deliver his people.

This is a list of the most vulnerable. The Lord

has a preferential option for the poor.

Ephraim = EE-fray-ihm or EF-r*tm = a tribe
of Israel

READING I

Today's reading from
Jeremiah stands out in con-

trast to the rest of the prophetic
book. Jeremiah's prophecies predominantly
resonate with doom and gloom, yet in this
passage we find language of hope and
rejoicing. In these verses, Jeremiah anti-
cipates the future restoration of Israel. This is
clearly a moment of divine triumph as the
"remnant of Israel," those who survived the
exile, return to their homeland. God does
not simply restore the people of Israel to
their lands. He consoles them as they jour-
ney back, providing fresh drinking water

and a smooth road to ease their tears and
burdens.

Among those returning, Jeremiah
draws special attention to the blind and
lame, as well as expectant mothers. These
are groups of people who are vulnerable or
marginalized in society. In contrast to past
injunctions that kept them apart from
the rest of Israelite society (for example,
Leviticus 21:18 and 2 Samuel 5:8), they are
included in the pilgrimage, rejoicing in their
restoration to the Israelite community as
well as to their homeland. Thus, God's sal-

utation is open to everyone, including the
vulnerable. They are included with the rest
of Israel when God declares himself "a
father to Israel."
The reference to Ephraim is two-fold.
First, it refers to the central power base of
the northern kingdom of Israel that fell to
the Assyrian invasion and exile. Thus, it is
first-born as a power base. Second, the
tribe of Ephraim are descendants of
Joseph's younger son of the same name. As
he lay dying, Jacob conferred the blessing
of the first-born on Ephraim even though
Joseph's elder son, Manasseh, should have
received it (Genesis 48:8-20). This reversal

For meditation and context:

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6 (3)

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.
 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.

When the Lord brought back the captives of Zion,
 those that sow in tears shall reap rejoicing.
 Although they go forth weeping,
 carrying the seed to be sown,
 they shall come back rejoicing,
 carrying their sheaves.

READING II Hebrews 5:1-6

A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews

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.*

The first part of this reading outlines the qualities of a high priest; the second part invites us to apply those qualities to Jesus.

The title of "Christ" means "the anointed one." Jesus is anointed, like the high priest.

"Son" draws attention to the relationship between Jesus and the Father. Read tenderly and with pride.

begotten = bee-GAW-t*ⁿ

Melchizedek = mehl-KEEZ-uh-dehk

or mehl-KIZ-uh-dehk

of expectations coincides with the reversal of the expectations of the marginalized referred to in this passage.

READING II

This reading from Hebrews connects Jesus' priesthood with the characteristics of Israelite high priests. The first characteristic is his patience toward the weak and sinners. Through his incarnation, Jesus understands the weaknesses of the flesh, although he himself did not err. His compassion makes him a fitting high priest who offers sacrifice to purify God's people from their sins.

The second characteristic of a high priest is his humility in never seeking or taking for himself the honor of being a high priest. Instead, he takes it up "only when called by God." Thus, all honor and glory belong to God alone. We see an example of this in the person of Christ, when, in John's Gospel, Jesus' death on the cross is actually a moment of divine triumph, the glorification/exaltation of the cross. Another point of humility lies in recognizing that Jesus' high priesthood comes from God the Father. The two royal psalms (Psalm 2:7, 110:4) quoted in today's reading highlight Jesus' nature as Son of God as well as his priesthood. While the psalmist's adoption as God's son is figurative, in Jesus the reference is literal. And as God's Son, Jesus obeys the Father's will and his role in the salvific plan. Unlike Aaron and Melchizedek, Jesus is a "priest forever." These characteristics of Jesus as high priest are a motive for us to rejoice as the restored remnant of Israel are called to do in the first reading. Just as the vulnerable and marginalized are especially comforted, so should all humanity find comfort in Jesus' understanding of our weaknesses.

GOSPEL Mark 10:46-52

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

As Jesus was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a sizable crowd,

Bartimaeus, a blind man, the son of **Timaus**,

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.

Jericho = JAYR-ih-koh

This is a miracle story. Proclaim as if

you are witnessing it firsthand.

Bartimaeus = bahR-tih-MAY-uhs

or bahR-tih-MEE-uhs

Timaus = tih-MAY-uhs or ti-MEE-uhs

Imagine that you are the blind beggar. What

tone of voice would you use as you call out

to Jesus?

Read with breathlessness. "Threw,"

"sprang," and "came" give the sense

of immediacy.

Bartimaeus experienced great joy. What

can we do to help someone be set free from

their bondage?

GOSPEL

In today's Gospel reading, we have an example of Jesus' salvific activity. This passage describes Jesus' last miracle before entering Jerusalem and his passion. Today's first reading speaks of the rejoicing of the blind as they are restored. Here in Mark's Gospel, we have the restoration of sight of a blind man named Bartimaeus. He calls to Jesus using the messianic title "Son of David."

Although we are weak and vulnerable, we are rescued and restored through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross.

Although Bartimaeus is blind, he "sees" Jesus for who he really is: the Messiah who has the power to heal the blind and the lame. Jesus commends his faith and heals him, telling him to "Go." Upon being restored, Bartimaeus immediately obeys Jesus, following Jesus "on the way." It is important to note that "the way" is a major theme in Mark's Gospel. It is Jesus' journey to Jerusalem and his passion. It also indicates the road of discipleship that leads to the cross. After his healing, Bartimaeus becomes a disciple of Jesus and accompanies him on the way. In the verses immediately following this passage, Jesus reaches Jerusalem at last, where he fulfills his role as the perfect high priest and perfect sacrifice described in today's second reading. Today's readings invite us to rejoice in God's salvific action in our lives. At the same time, we can imitate Bartimaeus and ask the Lord to heal us of any "blindness" that keeps us from seeing the path that leads to God's heart or from accepting the crosses that come along "the way." M.B.