

Homily for the 30th Sun in Ord. “B”
Oct. 24-25, 2009

One thing which makes us equal, is our need for Gods’ forgiveness. We are all sinners. All of us are subject to weakness and shortsightedness, and we all need to grow toward holiness.

I became a Priest, not because I was sinless, but because I was aware of my sins. I choose this vocation as the best way for me to confront that sin and to face the challenge of overcoming it each day.

As a Priest, I am aware of the hurt and the destruction, which sin causes. I have recognized in most of the confessions that I have ever heard a reminder of my own sins.

Once a month I meet with a group of Priests, and we talk about our lives and pray together. It is the way we support one another, accept challenges from each other, and to help each other to see where our sins get in the way of our ministry. It is also a time to celebrate the Sacrament of Confession.

We are very much aware of the words of St. Paul, when he says that priests are taken from among men because we are sinners ourselves, and make offerings and prayers in reparation for our sins as well.

When I preach to you, I preach to myself as well. When the Gospel exhorts us to acknowledge our sins, I feel the pinch of those words for myself.

It is not easy to confront our sinfulness. At least it is not easy for me to confront my faults, sins and weaknesses.

But even though it is difficult, I will never be able to see clearly the ideal of life God calls me to, unless I am willing to unwrap myself from my sins and selfishness.

We are all the Blind Bartimeus. We sit by the roadside, almost comfortable in our blindness, and we wrap ourselves in lies, sin and sometimes it seems we take comfort in our weakness and spend our efforts to become friends not with God, but with sin.

The powerful insight of this Gospel is that Bartimeus ignored the voices which told him to stay in his place. He ignored the human drive to remain comfortable, and he got up. He would not become friends with sin any longer, he unwrapped himself, and went to Jesus saying, "Raboni, I want to see."

But here, there is an even greater marvel; the mercy, and the love of God. I am amazed when I think of his capacity to forgive us. I am overcome with wonder, when I realize the Lord's love for me is strong even in the midst of my sinfulness. Even while I am sinning.

It is because of the great love of God that I can struggle to keep examining my life and actions. I want to see. It is because of his love that I seek to be reconciled.

The Church was established by Christ, not only as the means by which his message would be brought to the generations, but also to be the tool which makes us aware of our sins, and reconciles us to God and one another. There can be no reconciliation without awareness of sin. The Church has a duty to teach what is offensive to God, and point out what destroys love and communion.

No member of this Church is above the need to examine and name the sin in his or her lives. No member of the Church is free from the need to seek forgiveness again and again.

Christ's love and forgiveness must be responded to, and we must seek it out. It will not be forced upon us, we have to want it and take the steps to seek it out like the blind Bartimeus.

Not one of us sinners can seek God alone. Not one of us can become the person, which Jesus calls us to become without the grace, and support which comes from our sharing communion as members of the Body of Christ.