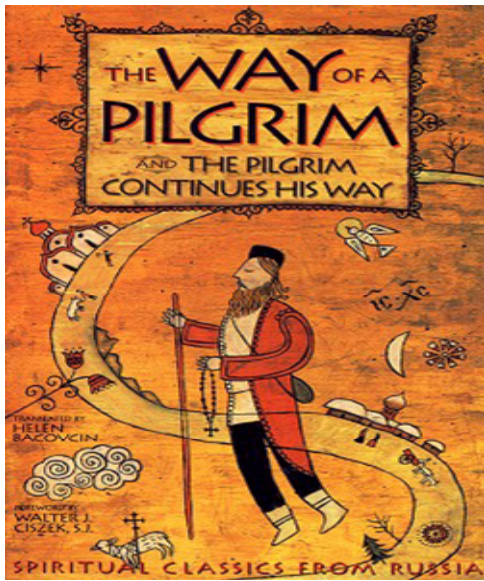


Dear Brothers and Sisters,



Jesus leaves Jericho, accompanied by “his disciples and a sizable crowd”.

Jericho is the antithesis of Jerusalem. If Jerusalem represents the Holy City, the place of the dwelling of the Lord, Jericho represents the opposite: rebellion, sin, the dwelling place of the enemies of the people of God.

Jesus Christ opens a way for the crowd to leave Jericho and travel towards Jerusalem. It is he who takes the initiative on this itinerary; others - the disciples, the sizable crowd, you and me - are consequently able to follow him.

One man who is unable to leave Jericho and head towards Jerusalem is Bartimaeus. He hears the sounds of people as they depart Jericho, but cannot join them because he is blind. He would like to go, but is unable, to.

We have two eyes in our head. One eye was created to be able to see the love of God, the other eye was created to look upon others with love. Bartimaeus can do neither. He cannot see God, he cannot see his neighbor. He is stuck in Jericho.

Bartimaeus is another name for you and me. The cause of blindness - the real blindness- spiritual blindness, ie blindness of the soul - is sin.

Do we look at God with love? Meaning, are we thankful to Him for absolutely everything? Do we look at others with love? Meaning, are we thankful for them, exactly the way they are? Sure, when everything is going the way we like, but when it's not...?

Bartimaeus begins to pray: “Jesus Son of David, have pity on me, a sinner”

This prayer, and this prayer alone, is enough for him to restore his sight.

This prayer enables him to see God and others with gratitude, with love.

This prayer, which is known as the prayer of the heart, is able to heal our own blindness.

There is a little book, by an anonymous author, titled “The Way of a Pilgrim.” It recounts the journey of a Russian man who hears one day in Mass a Scripture passage saying that we should pray at all times. He thinks to himself, ‘how is it possible to pray at all times, without ceasing? To pray when working, eating, sleeping?’

His life becomes a pilgrimage to discover the prayer of Bartimaeus, the prayer of the heart. This prayer becomes part of him, every time his heart beats, every time he breathes in or out, he begins to pray without ceasing. Working, eating, when awake, when asleep. He was blind, but did not know it. His eyes are opened by Christ, and he sees for the first time.

He leaves Jericho for Jerusalem. Would you like to experience the same thing? It is offered at Mass today.

FR Sean