

**“Call me Bartimaeus”** (Homily)

Deacon John Fulton, St. Kevin Roman Catholic Church, Warwick, Rhode Island  
October 28, 2018 – Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time -- Mark 10:46-52

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Call me Bartimaeus! For his story is my story.

Of course, I was not born blind. By the grace of God, my eyes at birth were as good as anyone's. But one can easily become blind! One need only look away. One need only close one's eyes. And this is what I did in 1973.

At the time, I was a graduate student at Brown University, a community in turmoil, whose moral fabric had been ripped asunder by the recent war, the sexual revolution, the drug trade, by every "ism" you can think of (and some I'll bet you can't). Freedom was in the air! ... freedom to indulge one's desires, one's lusts, one's dirty little secrets ... freedom to hate and to hurt one's enemies, one's competitors -- even one's self.

And so when seven good men made a very bad decision that year, when they elevated the right to privacy above the right to life, when abortion was unleashed, the university celebrated: Men celebrated a new-found freedom, as did women (or so they thought at first). Psychologists celebrated an end to guilt, and sociologists, an end to poverty. Socialists celebrated power to the people, and racists, a way to eliminate a people (though these last celebrated in secret).

I watched this unholy bacchanal, and overwhelmed by it, looked away, closed my eyes, and retired to my studies in the library. It was about the only place where order reigned, where one could find sanity and sobriety -- peace! (or so I thought at first). But even self-imposed blindness has its limits! Something -- was it God? -- tugged at me, made me restless in my sanctuary. And so from time to time, I would open my eyes. And over the years, what I saw disturbed me much more than the celebrations over “legal” abortion I had originally shunned.

I saw men who abused women with impunity. I saw women forced to submit to the abortionist's knife -- confused, and consumed by guilt. I saw psychologists denying inconvenient truths, and sociologists puzzled by unanticipated results. I saw racists gloating, as those they hated brought fewer babies into the world. I saw an industry grow: killing factories built, money made, politicians bought, and lies propagated. I saw friends betrayed and marriages ended. I saw gaping wounds that would not heal.

Yet, I remained in my sanctuary, retreating, time after time, from what disturbed me, from what seemed so at odds with what those around me (at the university) saw and proclaimed as truth: the benefits of "choice."

I was especially confused by my church. I was a Protestant then, and my church remained silent on the issue of abortion, an issue -- *the* issue -- that had seized my attention.

And then one day a man walked into my life, a man who caught my attention, and held it. His name was John Paul, and I heard his clear and unwavering voice above the unholy din of the university. He wasn't Jesus, but you could have fooled me! I felt my heart crying out, "Open my eyes!" "I want to see!" "I want to see the truth!" "Teach me the truth!"

As I cried out, I felt my faith grow, or perhaps *freed* -- from worldly lies, from my timidity, from the silence of my church. And thus I regained my sight. I saw in John Paul's words -- and in his Church -- the truth of the ages, the truth of God: not "a" truth, but "the" truth.

**Abortion is wrong!** As a sinful choice, abortion CAN be forgiven, but its effect CANNOT be taken back, CANNOT be fixed. A *unique* life, a *unique* soul, a *unique* gift of God is irreplaceable. **Life is infinitely more important than privacy!**

That we all could see this truth, and respect it, and follow it! But temptation abounds! Thus we need laws -- based in truth -- that protect life.

Do not be blinded by the lies of a corrupt industry -- an industry of death -- lurking to prey on human weakness, promising gain and peace, but delivering loss and guilt! Ask Jesus to open your eyes, and to keep them open. And follow him.

Do not surrender to the "pro-choice" mob, to *their* blindness. Do not accommodate them. Fight them! Help them to see, and if they WILL NOT see, fight them! Fight them all.

And go with God!

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Mark 10:46-52

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.