

30<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle B  
October 24/25, 2009  
5:00 p.m., 8:00 a.m.

1. Isn't it amazing what people will do to get noticed? – to get their 30 seconds of fame?
  - the amazing story of the "Balloon Boy," Falcon Heene captured the attention of the entire world
  - and now, his parents admit, the whole thing was a "hoax" aimed at drawing attention to the family who first gained its fame on the TV series, "Wife Swap"

I suppose, in some ways, it points to an inherent human need

- there must be something in every human being makes us want to cry out, "take notice, I'm here, don't ignore me, I really do matter."
- and it's sad when people think they don't count any longer, they are ancient history, abandoned, set aside, unnoticed.

2. In today's Gospel we hear of such a man cast aside, forgotten of whom God takes notice
  - out of the 3 Gospels the story is contained in, only one bothers to mention the man's name – Bartimaeus
  - Bartimaeus stands on the OUTSIDE of the city; away from the crowd of able-bodied men and women
  - his disability makes him different than others and his poverty becomes a double whammy of rejection and dependence
  - and he is sitting; he is not standing
  - maybe the sitting indicates he was too tired; too overwhelmed; too burdened to stand
  - standing would indicate a readiness; an eagerness; but sitting – indicates something entirely different – he was too tired, too weak, too burdened to stand
  - When Bartimaeus realizes the opportunity before him he cries out, "Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me." What he's saying really is: Pay attention. Notice me. Look at my need.
  - but the word "pity" here doesn't mean just feel sorry for me
  - Pity is an action word, it means – "take pity on me." Help me in my situation, free me of my malady, cure me, make me whole."

3. Jesus STOPS, LISTENS and says to the others – CALL HIM
  - he asks others to intervene, be instruments, drawing the one in need closer to Jesus
  - they say to Bartimaeus, "take courage, Jesus is calling you."
  - for someone who has spent a lifetime in darkness; these are welcome words
  - and when he hears those words, he STANDS UP, THROWS ASIDE HIS CLOAK and CAME TO JESUS

4. Jesus simply asks him, "What do you want me to do for you? How can I help? "
  - the blind man says, "Master, I want to see."
  - and Jesus told him, "Go your way, your faith has saved you."
  - he receives his sight and follows Jesus on the way

5. When you think about it, Jesus never treated others as if they didn't matter, they weren't important
  - think about the woman in Luke's Gospel who bled for 12 years, she just reached out and touched his garment – and Jesus asked, "Who touched me. And when he found her, she told him her whole truth."
  - think about Zacchaeus and how he watched from a distance in the tree and Jesus called to him and said, "I want to dine at your home today."
  - or the children whom Jesus embraced when others thought they should be sent away
  - Jesus treated everyone he encountered as a child of God; a reflection of the divine; worthy of admiration, respect and dignity
  
6. One of the seven principles of Catholic moral teaching is the belief that human beings are precious; that people are more important than things and that the measure of any institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person
  - and one of the goals of faith is to see differently; to recognize ourselves as loved, and cherished by God and to bring that vision; that way of seeing into the lives of those we serve – especially the poor, the suffering, the abandoned, the abused – those on the outside who feel neglected and forgotten
  
7. It's so hard for us to believe that we are loved by God that much
  - for me, it was the hardest struggle of my life
  - for a long time, I believed I was loved not because of who I was but because of what I did
  - I thought I had to earn God's love, God's care
  - I remember the breakthrough that happened for me when I was 23 yrs old
  - it was like falling in love again for the first time
  - I felt completely enveloped in God's love
  - I began to see all of life with a new set of lenses
  - and from within me; a new ability to love others; that wasn't about me but was about God's love at work in and through me
  - as 1 John 4:18 reminds us, "Perfect love casts out all fear."
  
8. Our faith in Jesus Christ gives us a new way of seeing the world and others
  - if you feel unimportant, unloved, unnoticed, forgotten, abandoned, or neglected
  - Jesus says, "Take courage. Your faith heals you. I will always love you. You are cherished. You are cared about. You are precious and valuable in my sight.
  - and when you know, beyond a doubt, that love, there is no stopping you from sharing it with others
  
  - and no need for making headlines or concocting elaborate hoaxes
  - because knowing you have God's attention and unconditional love is all the spotlight you'll ever need