

Bishop Richard's Weekly Reflection for the 30th Sunday of the Year (B) 24th October 2021

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

The Prophet Jeremiah is usually associated with gloom and despondency, yet his words in this Sunday's first reading are filled with hope and the news of home coming – of salvation. The Psalmist speaks of God's saving power and the new life that comes with His deliverance.

When we turn to the Gospel, Jesus heals the blind beggar, Bartimaeus. Here we find a man reduced to begging as a result of his disability. He is unable to work, he has no dignity in the eyes of others and when he speaks he is told to keep quiet. Nobody has any time for him – save Jesus. The result of this encounter is transformative on so many levels. Bartimaeus can see. This is wonderful in itself – but there is so much more. His sight restored, he is no longer alone, he can walk with others – following the Lord as he does so. He has his place in society again and he will be able to work. He finds his dignity as a member of the community and, beyond that, salvation in his following of Christ.

The value of the human person is at the heart of the Gospel and the healing of Bartimaeus is a call to each one of us to recognise the dignity in the other. Just as Jesus listened to him when others would not, so must we. As Jesus restored Bartimaeus through the encounter of faith, so we are called to be those through whom others find faith and life. As Bartimaeus found his place in the world, so we must help our brothers and sisters find their place, their dignity as people created and loved by God. As we follow the Lord along the road of our lives, let us always reach out to others, inviting them to walk with us that – through the encounter with the person of Jesus – all may “have life and have it to the full”

With every Blessing,

+ Richard