



## 7TH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW JULY 31

### THE GOSPEL READING

#### Matthew 9:27-35

[Two Blind Men and a Demoniac Healed]

*At that time, as Jesus passed by, two blind men followed him, crying aloud, "Have mercy on us, Son of David." When he entered the house, the blind men came to him; and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord." Then he touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith be it done to you." And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly charged them, "See that no one knows it." But they went away and spread his fame through all that district.*

*As they were going away, behold, a dumb demoniac was brought to him. And when the demon had been cast out, the dumb man spoke; and the crowds marveled, saying, "Never was anything like this seen in Israel." But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the prince of demons."*

*And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people.*

### THE SERMON

The Lord Jesus travels through the region of Galilee, where He was raised. Two blind men heard that He was passing by, and they started following Him, asking for His mercy and help. The blind men could not physically see, but they had heard about the



Lord, and the eyes of their hearts were beginning to open as they followed Him, trusting that He would be able to help them. They cried aloud, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!"

Jesus waits to answer so that He may draw out their faith further. The Lord allows them to seek Him with all their hearts, souls, minds, and strength, putting all their hope in Him because He loved them and wanted to restore their lives. They follow Him to the house where He was staying, and as He enters, they go inside, not giving up on their hope in the Lord.

Their hope would be rewarded by the Philanthropist, Jesus Christ, who is always found by those who seek Him. Their cry for mercy is a pattern we use today every time we say, "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me." The Jesus Prayer illumines our hearts and minds. It connects us with the "Son of David," the Messiah and Son of God, Jesus Christ, who opens our eyes through His mercy to see His love and glory.

The prophets of the Old Testament, speaking with the voice inspired by the Holy Spirit, declare that when the Messiah comes, healing and renewal come through Him. The Prophet Isaiah says, "Be comforted, you fainthearted. Be strong; do not fear. Behold, our God renders judgment and will render it. He will come and save us. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall hear" (Isaiah 35:4-5). Jesus is the Messiah, which means the Anointed One; He is the Christ. The One who comes to save us. Who opens our ears as He calls us with the voice of the Shepherd, and we are His flock who hear His voice and follow Him. He enters the house, and we follow Him there, into the Church. He is the incarnate Word of God, and when He speaks, the heavens and the earth are created and recreated, transformed, and renewed.

The Messiah comes, and the eyes of the blind open. The ears of the deaf hear God speaking. When our forefathers, Adam and Eve, turned away from communion with God to follow their own desires and seek independence from Him, their vision blurred, and they became hard of hearing. All creation, which was transparent to them, filled with the Light of God, became dim. The world became foreign to them. They could no longer see clearly, and in fact, they did not even want to be seen by God either because of their shame. They hid from Him, but the Lord, in His love, did not abandon them but instead called for them and began the process of restoration in their lives.

This restoration process continues throughout the ages as God reveals Himself to His people, and now it culminates with the Incarnation of the Son of God to deliver humankind from death, blindness, and deafness, both physical and spiritual. Jesus Christ, the Son of God now comes, and the blind see, the deaf hear, and the disabled walk. More important than bodily healing, it is with the eyes of our inner selves, our hearts, and minds, that we see and hear. We begin to see clearly when we have faith.

Jesus Christ gives sight to the blind because He is the Light of the world. The two blind men become, as it were, two witnesses to the power, love, and compassion of Jesus Christ. These two men tell us that they were blind, and now they see because they

believe in the One who can heal them, and He honors their faith. As witnesses to Christ, they tell each of us that if we believe in Him and call on Him for His mercy and grace, He will answer.

The Lord seeks our faith, and He asks us, “do you believe that I am able to do this?” He desires our faith because our trust in Him restores our communion with Him. When we trust Him, we do so because we love Him. We love Him because He has loved us first. Therefore, being united to Him in love will result from faith in Him. Whatever we face in our lives, even the most challenging problems that might arise, is always known by Him, and He asks us, “do you believe that I am able to do this?” The Lord desires that we wholeheartedly say “yes” to Him because when we place our faith in Him, He works in us according to our faith.

The connection between faith and the opening of our eyes is the connection between love and the illumination of our lives. To trust the Lord is to love Him, and the love of God opens our eyes to see all things as He sees them. We no longer have to rely on our merely human vision, which, without God, is spiritual blindness. On the contrary, we begin to see with the eyes of faith. Fear is cast out, and darkness dispelled with the Light of Christ. The blind men see because they believe. They do not believe because they see. Their faith leads them to see, to be illuminated with the Light of Christ.

With our hearts illumined, we rest in God, and we also begin to love one another in concrete ways because we become able to see them as God sees them, each human being as an icon of Jesus Christ. Saint Maria of Paris says, “However hard I try, I find it impossible to construct anything greater than these three words, ‘Love one another’—only to the end, and without exceptions: then all is justified, and life is illumined.”

Jesus Christ is the Light of the world and the Light of our lives. All is justified and illumined by Him when we follow Him and ask for His mercy. He can heal, transform, and restore whatever affects us negatively in this life. Our sight is restored, and we are no longer debilitated but able to walk with Christ and one another. Our ears are open to the Word of God, our neighbor’s voice, and the cry of those in need. Jesus hears and answers because of His love for us. We also become enabled by Him to hear one another, see with eyes of love, and walk in the path of peace.