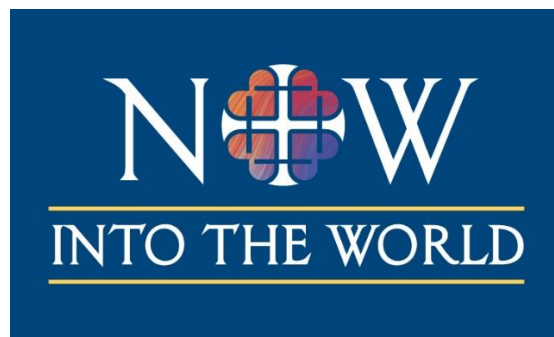


Steward in a Crowd

"Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.



Reflection by Tom Hahn –



Many gospel stories are told about unnamed women and men. For me, though, and I also suspect you, knowing names tends to draw me into relationships, because I'm not merely reading about characters who have story roles, but I'm coming to know relatable personalities: Mary and Martha, Mary Magdalene, Nicodemus the nighttime visitor, Peter, and, yes, Thomas.

This reading from Mark's Gospel, with his sparsely told stories of Jesus' life, is one of my favorites. Here, we learn about a blind beggar who Jesus meets on his journey to Jerusalem. This roadside beggar, though, is not again another of society's disabled poor. This is Bartimaeus, who, in only seven of Mark's verses, we come to learn about, and also come to be taught lessons as to what stewardship is really about.

Mark is silent as to how Bartimaeus learns that Jesus is Lord, "Son of David," but Mark does write that when Bartimaeus learns Jesus is near he shouts out as to Jesus' real identity and asks Jesus for healing. An accompanying crowd, though, demands he be quiet, but Bartimaeus then even more loudly shouts. Bartimaeus is a witnessing steward of God's gifts to us through Christ's life with us and his shared proclamations of the kingdom. Bartimaeus' example raises me up to

a question as to when have I responded to God's given opportunities with courageous witnessing and asking?

When Jesus invites Bartimaeus to come, Bartimaeus comes throwing off his cloak. WHAT? Bartimaeus unburdens himself of a sheltering cloak that for a roadside beggar is not mere luxury but a valuable worldly possession – all be it treasure. Mark is economical with text. Therefore, we're invited to be uncomplicated with interpretation. Bartimaeus, the steward, values Jesus' invitation as a more valuable treasure than his worldly possession. Is this how I steward God's worldly gifts when discerning my annual parish pledge?

Jesus seeing Bartimaeus' faith restores his sight, and Bartimaeus then follows Jesus on the way. Bartimaeus doesn't say a stock "thank you, and see you around." As a faithful steward, Bartimaeus now gives of his time to follow Jesus with his empowering restored sight. Is this how I steward God's time and talent gifts?

Bartimaeus is one of my all-round stewardship mentors. I pray he'll also be one of yours.

Tom Hahn serves as co-chair of both the diocesan Commission on Ministry and the Discernment Facilitator Committee. He is an EFM co-mentor, a trained and commissioned Stephen Minister, and serves on both the stewardship finance committees at Christ Church, Alexandria. He is passionate about the outdoors, his family, and especially his granddaughter!

October 28th 2018

Proper 25 | Mark 10:46-52



Sculpture entitled "Faith" by artist Mark Hopkins, which depicts Jesus' healing of Bartimaeus

Reflection Questions

- Which character from the Gospels can you most relate to?
- How does the personality of that character help you see God more clearly?
 - In your life?
 - In the lives of others?
 - In the life of your church community?
- What gifts do you feel you have received from Jesus?
- How do you tell others about God's generosity to you and how can you use what you have received to encourage others to follow Jesus?

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