

Saint_Thomas_explains_the_Gospel_for_Quinquagesima_Sunday

Then Jesus took unto him the twelve, and said to them: Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things shall be accomplished which were written by the prophets concerning the Son of man. For he shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and scourged, and spit upon: And after they have scourged him, they will put him to death; and the third day he shall rise again. And they understood none of these things, and this word was hid from them, and they understood not the things that were said. Now it came to pass, when he drew nigh to Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the way side, begging. And when he heard the multitude passing by, he asked what this meant. And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And he cried out, saying: Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me. And they that went before, rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried out much more: Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus standing, commanded him to be brought unto him. And when he was come near, he asked him, Saying: What wilt thou that I do to thee? But he said: Lord, that I may see. And Jesus said to him: Receive thy sight: thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he saw, and followed him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God. (St. Luke 18 31-43)

GREG. The Savior foreseeing that the hearts of His disciples would be troubled at His Passion, tells them long before-hand both the suffering of His Passion and the glory of His Resurrection.

BEDE; And knowing that there would arise certain heretics, saying, that Christ taught things contrary to the Law and the Prophets, He shows already that the voices of the Prophets had proclaimed the accomplishment of His Passion, and the glory which should follow.

CHRYL. He speaks with His disciples apart, concerning His Passion. For it was not fitting to publish this word to the multitudes, lest they should be troubled, but to His disciples He foretold it, that being habituated by expectation, they might be the more able to bear it.

CYRIL; And to convince them that He foreknew His Passion, and of His own accord came to it, that they might not say, "How has He fallen into the hands of the enemy, who promised us salvation?" He relates in order the successive events of the Passion; He shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and scourged, and spitted on.

CHRYL. Esaias prophesied of this when he said, I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting. The Prophet also foretold the crucifixion, saying, He has poured out his soul to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; as it is said here, And after they have scourged him, they shall put him to death. But David foretold Christ's resurrection, For you shall not leave my soul in hell, and so it is here added, And on the third day he shall rise again.

ISIDORE; I marvel at the folly of those who ask how Christ rose again before the three days. If indeed He rose later than he had foretold, it were a mark of weakness, but if sooner, a token of the highest power. For when we see a man who has promised his creditor that he will pay him his debt after three days, fulfilling his promise on that very day, we are so far from looking upon him as deceitful, that we admire his veracity. I must add, however, that He said not that He should rise again after three days, but on the third day. You have then the preparation, the Sabbath until sun set, and the fact that He rose after the Sabbath was over.

CYRIL; The disciples did not as yet know exactly what the Prophets had foretold, but after He rose again, He opened their understanding that they should understand the Scriptures.

BEDE; For because they desired His life above all things, they could not hear of His death, and as they knew him to be not only a spotless man, but also very God, they thought He could in no wise die. And whenever in the parables, which they frequently heard Him utter, He said any thing concerning His Passion, they believed it to be spoken allegorically, and referred to something else. Hence it follows, And this saying was hid; from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken. But the Jews, who conspired against His life, knew that He spoke concerning His Passion, when he said, The Son of man must be lifted up; therefore said they, We have heard in our law that Christ abides for ever, and how say you the Son of man must be lifted up?

GREG. Because the disciples being yet carnal were unable to receive the words of mystery, they are brought to a miracle. Before their eyes a blind man receives his sight, that by a divine work their faith might be strengthened.

THEOPHYL. And to show that our Lord did not even walk without doing good, He performed a miracle on the way, giving His disciples this example, that we should be profitable in all things, and that nothing in us should be in vain.

AUG. We might understand the expression of being nigh to Jericho, as if they had already gone out of it, but were still near. It might, though less common in this sense, be so taken here, since Matthew relates, that as they were going out of Jericho, two men received their sight who sat by the way side. There need be no question about the number, if we suppose that one of the Evangelists remembering only one was silent about the other Mark also mentions only one, and he too says that he received his sight as they were going out of Jericho; he has given also the name of the man and of his father, to let us understand that this one was well known, but the other not so, so that it might come to pass that the one who was known would be naturally the only one mentioned. But seeing that what follows in St. Luke's Gospel most plainly proves the truth of his account, that while they were yet coming to Jericho, the miracle took place, we cannot but suppose that there were two such miracles, the first upon one blind man when our Lord was coming to that city, the second on two, when He was departing out of it; Luke relating the one, Matthew the other.

PSEUDO-CHRYS. There was a great multitude gathered round Christ, and the blind man indeed knew Him not, but felt a drawing towards Him, and grasped with his heart

what his sight embraced not. As it follows, And when he heard the multitude passing by, he asked what it was. And those that saw spoke indeed according to their own opinion.

And they told him that Jesus of Nazareth passes by. But the blind man cried out. He is told one thing, he proclaims another; for it follows, And he cried out, saying, Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me. Who taught you this, O man? Have you that are deprived of sight read books? Whence then know you the Light of the world? Verily the Lord gives sight to the blind.

CYRIL; Having been brought up a Jew, he was not ignorant that of the seed of David should God be born according to the flesh, and therefore he addresses Him as God, saying, Have mercy upon me. Would that those might imitate him who divide Christ into two. For he speaks of Christ as God, yet calls Him Son of David. But they marvel at the justice of his confession, and some even wished to prevent him from confessing his faith. But by checks of this kind his ardor was not damped. For faith is able to resist all, and to triumph over all. It is a good thing to lay aside shame in behalf of divine worship. For if for money's sake some are bold, is it not fitting when the soul is at stake, to put on a righteous boldness?

As it follows, But he cried out the more, Son of David, &c. The voice of one invoking in faith stops Christ, for He looks back upon them who call upon Him in faith.

And accordingly He calls the blind man to Him, and bids him draw nigh, that he in truth who had first laid hold on Him in faith, might approach Him also in the body.

The Lord asks this blind man as he drew near, What will you that I shall do? He asks the question purposely, not as ignorant, but that those who stood by might know that he sought not money, but divine power from God. And thus it follows, But he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight.

PSEUDO-CHRYS. Or because the Jews perverting the truth might say, as in the case of him who was born blind, This is not he, but one like to him, He wished the blind first to make manifest the infirmity of his nature, that then he might fully acknowledge the greatness of the grace bestowed upon him. And as soon as the blind man explained the nature of his request, with words of the highest authority He commanded him to see. As it follows, And Jesus said to him, Receive your sight. This served only still more to increase the guilt of unbelief in the Jews. For what prophet ever spoke in this way? Observe moreover what the physician claims from him whom he has restored to health. Your faith has saved you. For faith then mercies are sold. Where faith is willing to accept, there grace abounds. And as from the same fountain some in small vessels draw little water, while others in large draw much, the fountain knowing no difference in measure; and as according to the windows which are opened, the sun sheds more or less of its brightness within; so according to the measure of a man's motives does he draw down supplies of grace. The voice of Christ is changed into the light of the afflicted. For He was the Word of true light.

And thus it follows, And immediately he said. But the blind man as before his restoration he showed an earnest faith, so afterwards did he give plain tokens of his gratitude; And he followed him, glorifying God.

CYRIL; From which it is clear, that he was released from a double blindness, both bodily and intellectual. For he would not have glorified Him as God, had he not truly seen Him as He is. But he also gave occasion to others to glorify God; as it follows, And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

BEDE; Not only for the gift of light obtained, but for the merit of the faith which obtained it.

PSEUDO-CHRYS. We may here well inquire, why Christ forbids the healed demoniac who wished to follow Him, but permits the blind man who had received his sight. There seems to be a good reason for both the one case and the other. He sends away the former as a kind of herald, to proclaim aloud by the evidence of his own state his benefactor, for it was indeed a notable miracle to see a raving madman brought to a sound mind. But the blind man He allows to follow Him, since He was going up to Jerusalem about to accomplish the high mystery of the Cross, that men having a recent report of a miracle might not suppose that He suffered so much from helplessness as from compassion.

AMBROSE; In the blind man we have a type of the Gentile people, who have received by the Sacrament of our Lord the brightness of the light which they had lost. And it matters not whether the cure is conveyed in the case of one or two blind men, inasmuch as deriving their origin from Ham and Japhet, the sons of Noah, in the two blind men they put forward two authors of their race.

GREG. Or, blindness is a symbol of the human race, which in our first parent knowing not the brightness of heavenly light, now suffers the darkness of his condemnation. Jericho is interpreted 'the moon,' whose monthly wanings represent the feebleness of our mortality. While then our Creator is drawing nigh to Jericho, the blind is restored to sight, because when God took upon Him the weakness of our flesh, the human race received back the light which it had lost. He then who is ignorant of this brightness of the everlasting light, is blind. But if he does no more than believe in the Redeemer who said, I am the way, the truth, and the life; he sits by the way side. If he both believes and prays that he may receive the everlasting light, he sits by the way side and begs. Those that went before Jesus, as He was coming, represent the multitude of carnal desires, and the busy crowd of vices which before that Jesus comes to our heart, scatter our thoughts, and disturb us even in our prayers. But the blind man cried out the more; for the more violently we are assailed by our restless thoughts, the more fervently ought we to give ourselves to prayer. As long as we still suffer our manifold fancies to trouble us in our prayers, we feel in some measure Jesus passing by. But when we are very steadfast in prayer, God is fixed in our heart, and the lost light is restored. Or to pass by is of man, to stand is of God. The Lord then passing by heard the blind man crying, standing still restored him to sight, for by His humanity in compassion to our blindness He has pity upon our cries, by the power of His divinity He pours upon us the light of His grace.

Now for this reason He asks what the blind man wished, that He might stir up his heart to prayer, for He wishes that to be sought in prayer, which He knows beforehand both that we seek and He grants.

AMBROSE; Or, He asked the blind man to the end that we might believe, that without confession no man can be saved.

GREG. The blind man seeks from the Lord not gold, but light. Let us then seek not for false riches, but for that light which together with the Angels alone we may see, the way whereunto is faith. Well then was it said to the blind, Receive your sight; your faith has saved you. He who sees, also follows, because the good which he understands he practices.

AUG. If we interpret Jericho to mean the moon, and therefore death, our Lord when approaching His death commanded the light of the Gospel to be preached to the Jews only, who are signified by that one blind man whom Luke speaks of, but rising again from the dead and ascending to heaven, to both Jews and Gentiles; and these two nations seem to be denoted by the two blind men whom Matthew mentions.

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