

Jesus acknowledges this plea as the sign of Bartimaeus' faith, the faith he has been preaching as the essential prerequisite for healing and insight into the truth. With his sight restored, Bartimaeus completes the pattern of discipleship. He follows Jesus along the road to Jerusalem. In other words, he takes up the way of life revealed by Jesus, which will lead to suffering and death. The chapter ends, and in the first line of the next chapter Jesus begins his approach to Jerusalem.

## Application

One of the errors the Church has always resisted is that of Gnosticism, the claim that closeness to Christ depends on being a member of an elite group with special knowledge. The first step in discipleship is that of not knowing, the simplicity expressed by Bartimaeus the blind beggar, or the homelessness of the wanderer. True disciples lay no claim to being special. But something special happens to them through their encounter with Jesus.

The next step is that we place ourselves under his healing power. Sometimes, like Bartimaeus, we have to fling off even the little we have, our cloaks, our means of livelihood, what offers us fame and fortune in the world. But, in the act of healing, the great gift we receive is that of freedom. We are no longer bound by the burden of worldly expectations. Rather we are freed to follow Jesus in his dance along the road, a road of constant challenges.

The question Jesus continues to ask on the journey is the one he put to Bartimaeus: "What do you want me to do for you?" At times we can persecute ourselves with guilt or anxiety because we feel we are not doing enough for Jesus. Once again we have it the wrong way round. Jesus wants to know what he can do for us. As we answer the question, we hopefully make the same response as Bartimaeus and ask that we too may see.