



Bartimaeus

There is a new addition to The Men in White- Carl. Our community consists of men who have attended a Kairos prison retreat. When we get a new arrival, it is usually someone who is a transferee from another unit where they attended a retreat. It isn't always easy to notice a newcomer, but not Carl. He stands out from the others because of his white cane.

The instant you see a blind man in prison, your thoughts race to think of the many ways this limitation plays out in this environment. In prison, if you can be exploited, you will be exploited- like the night follows day. What is it like to be marginalized in this community of the marginalized?

Last week, Carl collapsed his white cane and put his hand on my shoulder. For a brief while, I was his companion. Carl's ability to function depends upon his trusting others- he has no other choice. His humility, acceptance, and patience stand out in a culture that celebrates toughness and bravado. This man who lives in darkness is a ray of light in a dark place. One sees former gang members rise up to go to Carl's assistance. His blindness makes visible the better angels in those around him.

In Scripture, there are many stories about the blind. My favorite is about Bartimaeus (Mk. 10-46-52). The passage reveals that Bartimaeus is the son of Timaeus. Timaeus plays no role in the passage. Furthermore, Timaeus is never mentioned elsewhere in Scripture. That Timaeus is described by name is important because it reminds us that every Bartimaeus is someone's son.

Like Bartimaeus, Carl is someone's son. Timaeus helps us to relate to a father who loves his son so much he suffers with him. Carl is now an old man. He does not speak of anyone on the outside, yet he knows he has a heavenly father that loves him.

We go to Lourdes with full confidence that healing will occur. It may be physical or spiritual. God's grace is not just for the afflicted, but for their companions, volunteers, and witnesses. God knows what is needed. I invite all of you to lift up your prayers not just for Carl, but for his companions, and those who witness the light of his trusting ways.