

NOVEMBER 17 2025 MSGR. SAM BIANCO

People often ask me when they hear my name, um, where do I come from? Because my name is Italian background.

I want to know! Was I born in Italy or what's my hometown and my home background?

And I do the usual explanation, explain that my grandparents actually came from Italy in 1903.

That's a reality of Canadian life that it seems to take a long time to say, "Well, actually, I'm really fundamentally a Canadian, but I have Italian background and roots and heritage," and people want to know that because they identify with people's backgrounds and heritage.

They want to know how you're like them and how you're different.

Sometimes they identify with people's backgrounds and heritages in a positive way. Sometimes, it can be in a negative way.

Everyone's intrigued about what's the background, who we are.

And then, once they ask you something about where you come from or what are your roots, they always want to know something about what's your family. Do you have brothers and sisters? Who's alive? What are your cousins like? What's your family life like?

And you describe them as best you can.

Now me, my family used to be very large. Just one sister still living and, uh, small, small numbers. Three nieces and nephews and just a smaller group of people from the wider family.

People like to hear that because they want to know what your family is like and then they begin to tell you what their family is like. And the good things and the not so good things. The troubles and the successes they have.

And the question I get almost all the time is why are you a priest? How long have you been a priest? Why did you choose to become a priest? What was it that drew you into the priesthood?

Tell us something about your journey in faith. Is it deeper? Is it stronger? What are the challenges that made you a priest?

And they're asking something about what's sort of at the heart of my being, because they want to know what it is that moves me, that graces me, and they can talk about and compare it to themselves because that's a human way of being part and identifying with another.

My priesthood is obviously, my being a human being is essential, but my priesthood is very much an essential part of who I am.

Jesus came. His background from Nazareth.

And you know in the scriptures, Nathaniel said, "Nazareth! Can anything good come out of it?"

And Nazareth was considered just a small, little, we know about it today, but it was then an obscure, a small little place. Not significant. Not worth any value or of anything.

So, Jesus' birth was extremely humble, extremely ordinary. The semi-lower class of people and He wasn't at the top of anything in the hierarchical structure.

Also, His family life. It was Son of David and that means He is whole tradition came from the great Jewish tradition, which is, we heard in the first reading, by the time of Antiochus, had been corrupted and the Jews were under the oppression of the Romans.

So Jesus, Son of David, when you hear that, it's, Oh! The great hopes of the Jewish people! And then the hurts.

And finally, Jesus is Lord.

Now, the word "Lord" can have two connotations. Lord can be something as hierarchical as a class, it can also be used when we say we lorded over people. We overpower them. We dominate them.

So that Jesus is Lord not in that overpowering way, but that way brings service and love.

And here's this man, this poor beggar, in the dust by the side of the road. He can't see and all he knows is this Saviour of the World is passing by and the first thing he recognized is that Jesus from Nazareth, that He comes from this obscure place.

That Jesus understands what it is to be at the bottom.

Eventually, will find on the road to Calvary. He ends up in the mud, in the dust, in the dirt, and in fact, the dust so blinds him the sun that at that point in his life, he can't see and that's something that resonates with this blind beggar.

And Jesus is also the Son of David.

Jesus' family, the people He belongs to, are all the people in the world who don't belong, who don't seem to have a family.

This beggar, for whatever reason, is by himself and isolated and what does he see in Jesus?

Somebody whom he can belong to.

Jesus welcomes him into family life with Him. He embraces him into that so that he can see he has another family and he can deepen his fam, his connection with his own family.

But most beautifully, Jesus is the loving saviour.

The man can't see and Jesus performs one of His great miracles. He embraces him and comes close to him. The man's eyes are open and his heart is open and he's able to see.

But it's not a Lord who imposes Himself on people, it's a lordship that's tender and loving and merciful and filled with grace.

And we don't know that name of that blind beggar and I suggest to you, in one way, he's anonymous, but he's not perfectly anonymous, is he?

Because he's us in our world today.

Everyone wants to know where they come from and where they're going. We need to know what are our roots.

Do we come from God and we're going to God. Is that something of the direction of our lives? And everyone here wants to know that we belong to a tradition, to a family that is large and expansive.

It's not only our own personal family. We belong to the family of the Church. We belong to the family of the world and we need to deepen it.

And I think today more than ever, our broken world needs a saviour who's loving. Someone who can heal, but someone who does it with a loving embrace because Jesus Himself was broken but was loved by the Father. He understands what it means that you and I cry out, "Jesus of Nazareth! Son of David! Have mercy on us! Heal us! Let us see again."