

Lent 4th Sunday (A)

27th March 2022

'Man Born Blind: Lord, that I may see!'

1Sam 16: anointing of David Ps 22: *my head you have anointed with oil ...*

Eph 5: *you are light in the Lord* Jn 9: 1-41: cure of the man born blind

Laetare Sunday gives us another very long Lenten Gospel from St John, helping us see the gifts that come from faith. We are working our way towards Easter, the greatest celebration of faith and of baptism. Last week's text used the imagery of 'living water.' The analogy that St John uses this week is that of *vision*: the blind man is healed, going from blindness to sight, but more importantly he goes from ignorance of Christ to knowledge, from doubt to faith. We can use this passage to reflect on the *enlightenment* of faith, and, like last week, to see our way through an extended examination of conscience for Lent:

1. Compassion. First, we take our cue from the response of Jesus to the man born blind: He immediately and without prompting offers him assistance. So: do we notice the sick and incapacitated in our midst, and come to their help? Can we think of anyone sick whom we have neglected? Even if they are not immediately around us to allow us to visit in person, have we been in

touch in some way, a phone call or a text? Is there any neglect here we could do with bringing to Confession?

2. Beggars. What about those who beg from us and ask for our assistance? The man born blind had begged for years and years. Our Lord Jesus offered him something far beyond the price of a few coins tossed his way. What do we do if we are approached by someone begging? Do we rush past them and shrug them off? Or do we at least offer them a smile and a courteous word. Or, when possible, offer to buy them something to eat? Has each of us done something, however little, for the relief of Ukrainian refugees? Does this prick our conscience and suggest anything we need to confess?
3. Children. The parents of the man born blind are hauled in to give testimony about their son, yet clearly they have distanced themselves from him, almost disowned him. Of course most of us here don't (yet) have children, so we might extend this idea a bit, and ask: are we giving good example to our siblings, esp. to younger brothers and sisters? Are we setting them a good

example of faith, of prayer, of ‘clean living’? Are there any ways in which we have scandalized our siblings, brought them to doubt the faith, or damaged their relationship with Jesus? Are we taking seriously the fact that our younger brothers and sisters look up to us, and take their lead from us, esp. in matters of faith? Are we behaving so as to protect and nurture their faith? Do we help them know the Lord, as best we can?

4. Keeping the Sabbath. Jesus upset the Pharisees by this healing which He carried out on the Sabbath, and yet it was an act of kindness and mercy. Do we try to keep Lord’s Day special in our own lives — a day which is first and foremost for the worship of God in the Mass? Do we also do our best to avoid working or shopping on Sunday, honouring it with recreation and time for family & friends? Let’s not forget the 3rd commandment: *Keep the Lord’s Day holy*.

5. Acknowledging Jesus. Several of those in the Gospel account are very wary of openly acknowledging Jesus — because of fear of what others might think. Does

that ring true with us, at all? Are we scared at all, or reluctant, to profess our faith in public? Are we in need of some forgiveness from the Lord here?

6. Ignorance. And finally, do we seek, like the man born blind, to become informed about our faith? *Sir — tell me who the Son of Man is, so that I may believe in Him*. Do we take some opportunity, alongside all our university learning, to inform ourselves more about Jesus and His Church? The CTS racks in the chapel lobby are full of short, easy texts about faith, saints, Catholic practice. Each of us could buy a little something to take home this Lent to learn a little more.

In each of these areas of life, we could do with making a quiet reflection, so we are helped to make a good Confession this Lent. It is only by examining our lives realistically that we can truly allow the Light of Christ in, to shine in our hearts more. As St Paul said: *You were darkness once, but now you are light in the Lord; be like children of the light, for the effects of the light are seen in complete goodness and right living and truth*. (Eph 5:8)