

Lent 4th Sunday (A)

15th March 2026

‘Recovering sight with the Man born Blind’

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

St John’s Gospel can actually be very funny. Honestly, if I’d hammed-up those dialogues in the Gospel just now with an exaggerated tone of voice, I’m sure we’d have had moments of “LOL”! I didn’t do that, of course, out of reverence for the sacred text, but ... the account *is* sort-of funny. The crazy dance as the Pharisees, the parents, and the man-born-blind, now healed, play mind games with each other about the meaning and origin of this miracle, is truly farcical; my favourite line is when the man-born-blind serves up his taunting, biting, comment to the Pharisees, “*Do you also want to become His disciples?*”

Perhaps it’s a good day to have a laugh! *Laetare* Sunday (‘Rejoice’ Sunday) is our mid-point of Lent, a brief respite from the rigours of Lenten discipline — the purple colour is tempered to become rose pink; and it’s Mothering Sunday, a tender remembrance, whether or not our mothers are alive; and maybe you might try and do something special, enjoyable, today, to mark the day.

But, seriously ... These very long Lent Gospels from St John help us work our way towards Easter, the greatest celebration of faith and of Baptism. Last week’s text (Jn 4) used the vivid imagery of “*living water*”; this week’s analogy (Jn 9) is that of *vision*: the blind man gains his sight, but more importantly he goes from ignorance of Christ to knowledge, from doubt to faith. Last Sunday I noticed that the Samaritan Woman’s rapid journey of faith was evident in the ways she referred to Jesus: first she calls Him “**Sir**”; then she says, “I perceive that you are a **prophet**”; after a while she asks, “Can this be the **Christ?**”; and then at the end, along with others from the village, she announces, “This is indeed the **Saviour** of the World.” Similarly today: first the man healed refers to “The **man** called Jesus”; then, when questioned, he states, “He is a **prophet**”; later he reasons, “If this man were not **from God**, He could do nothing”; and then, at the end, he says to Jesus, “**Lord**, I believe” and worships Him. That’s the trajectory of these middle three Sundays of Lent: *doubt to faith, blindness to sight, death to life*.

Once again, like last week, we can use this passage to reflect on the *enlightenment* of faith, and 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 see or 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? — better, probably, than giving cash. I choose to give regularly to a London charity for the assured practical assistance of the homeless — this would be a really worthwhile almsgiving for Lent. Does this prick our conscience or suggest anything we need to confess?

3. Family. The parents of the man born blind are hauled in to give testimony about their son, yet 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, 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? And, parents

too ... As we grow up, we need to treat them in a new grown-up way, but that doesn't take away from obeying the 4th Commandment, "*Honour your father & mother*" — do we honour them, love them, respect them, and be ready to *look after them*, especially as they grow old?

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 studying or shopping or chores* on Sunday, honouring it instead with recreation and time for friends & family? 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, or reluctant, to profess our faith in public? Are we prepared to discuss our faith with friends, to stand up

for Jesus, or *at least be known as a Catholic*? Are we in need of some forgiveness from the Lord here?

6. Ignorance. Finally, do we seek, like the man born blind, to become informed about our faith? "*Who is [the Son of Man], that I may believe in Him?*" Do we take some opportunity, alongside 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 away this Lent to learn a little more. We should *never* stop trying to deepen our understanding of Catholic truth.

In each of these 6 areas of life, we could do with making a proper, quiet reflection, so as to make a good Confession this Lent. It's 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: "*At one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light, for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true*" (Eph 5: 8–9).