

Lent 4A

There was this man born blind who had an operation at the age of fifty in which he gained his eyesight and could see for the first time. In an interview he said, 'I can't wait to get up in the morning to see what I can see. It's the most amazing thing in the world.'

The man in today's gospel must have felt like this but there is a deeper meaning to today's gospel. Everyone is born in a state of original blindness, better known as Original Sin. Baptism opens our eyes. The blind man was asked to wash in the Pool of Siloam which, is a symbol of the baptismal font. Baptism is a sacrament of enlightenment by means of which we receive the gift of faith. But we know that this light of faith, if not guarded and nourished, could easily grow dim and even go out altogether. At the baptismal ceremony parents are asked to help their children walk always as children of the light. If the parents' faith is on the surface or merely cultural or not connected to life then it will be like the blind leading the blind.

Jesus gives light to the blind whilst exposing in contrast those blind to the Light. The leading Pharisees turned their backs on Jesus - the Light of the World. Judas did the same. When Judas left the upper room at the Last Supper, Scripture tells us '*night had fallen*'. In our world there are unbelievers who'd rather we hide the light of our Catholic faith and not go public with it. It could be down to such a simple thing as wearing a cross round our necks. They don't mind what we believe privately so long as we keep it to ourselves.

The Pharisees asked the blind man: "what have you to say about Jesus yourself"? The same is asked of us. Can He rely on us to bring light into a darkened world? As his friends have we ever helped to open someone's eyes to the things of God.

The blind man comes away with two healings. His bodily eyes are opened but more importantly he receives spiritual enlightenment when he openly declares his faith in Jesus and worships Him as Lord to the ire of the Pharisees who ridicule him.

During Lent we take a look at what might be blinding us to the light. Perhaps we prefer to remain unconvinced about what we believe because then we feel less obligated to live by it. But Jesus says: "the man who lives by the Truth comes out into the light". Catholicism is a religion of revealed Truth. We're not left floundering around in a twilight world of our own making wondering what to believe. The Ten Commandments are not ten suggestions – *'take em or leave em'*. Jesus doesn't lead us up a blind alleyway to confuse us.

Some feel more at home with a God who keeps us in the dark. But God doesn't deal with us in an arbitrary fashion. Jesus says: "I have come into the world so that those without sight may see". Salvation involves clearly distinguishing truth from falsehood, light from darkness.

So, as the days get longer and we move further into Lent towards the full Light of Easter, we ask the Lord to increase our faith and dispel any darkness from our minds and hearts.