

Lent 4 B

When the oil lamp was invented in 1783 by a Swiss woman chemist by the name of Amy Argand, many people felt man's, or in this case woman's', genius had gone too far. The new lamp produced a light equal to nine candles and burned whale oil. An encyclopaedia of the time advised the use of a small screen between the eyes and the lamplight. At parties, ladies were accustomed to open their parasol against the 'uncomplimentary' glare of the lamps.

When we stand under the searching light of the Gospel we too may have to face up to some 'uncomplimentary' things about ourselves.

St. John's gospel draws quite a bit on the themes of light and darkness where Light symbolises faith and darkness the opposite. The battle between these two is dramatically brought out during the trial and passion of Jesus. The powers of darkness pinned their hopes on His death being the end of Him. But they were wide of the mark – Resurrection was just round the corner. By his death on the cross Jesus atones for our darkest deeds.

Lent is the time to put the spotlight on ourselves. Jesus says: *'anyone who does wrong hates the light and avoids it'*. They say that most sins are committed at night. When people wake up the next morning they often feel ashamed at what they did or said the night before. Is there any serious sin which remains un-confessed in our lives right now? If so, we must come into the light by seeking the forgiveness of God who takes the shame of sin away. If we have no desire to change then we are opting to stay in the darkness like the enemies of Jesus.

Jesus says: *'those who live by the truth come out into the light'*. We talk about the light of faith and the light of conscience. We will be judged on how we follow that light. So it is important to

inform our conscience with objective truth. Last Sunday the first reading was about the **Ten Commandments**. They're not ten suggestions. (Mention about the man who went to confession to Saint Padre Pio). Our responsibility is also to **pass on the light of faith** to others. Do we help our growing children or grandchildren to form moral judgements in the light of our catholic faith or leave them to make up their own minds without any guidance from the church at all? Some people form their conscience on what the majority of people in society think or what the papers say with scant reference to catholic teaching. Of course the teaching of Christ is often counter-cultural which may sometimes go against the grain of our fallen human nature.

As this (tomorrow / today) is **Mother's Day** we acknowledge the important contribution the different generations of mothers from this parish have made in passing on the light of their faith to their children.

*St Paul says that at the end of our **lives all the truth about us will be brought out in the law court of Christ**. Isn't it better for us to come under the spotlight of truth now rather than leaving it 'till it's too late'? Jesus says: 'work while you have the day for the night is coming when no one can work.' We are all children of the Day – we do not belong to the night or to darkness.*