

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 born blind stands for the whole human race. 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, for us, symbolises the baptismal font. Baptism is a sacrament of enlightenment. But we know that this light of faith, if not guarded, could easily grow dim. At the baptismal ceremony parents are asked to help their children walk always as children of the light. If the parents' faith is unconvincing or merely cultural then it will be like the blind leading the blind.

Jesus gives light to the blind while at the same time exposing those blind to the Light. The leading Pharisees turned their backs on Jesus - the Light of the World. Judas did the same. When he left the upper room at the Last Supper, 'night had fallen'. In our world there are people, who would rather we hide the light of our Catholic faith from the wider world. They don't mind what we believe privately so long as we don't go public with it. Recently a woman working for the NHS was thought rather odd because she came into work with ashes on her forehead.

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 to a darkened world? As his friends have we ever helped to open someone's eyes to the error of their ways or left them in the lurch. Perhaps the man who recently

committed those terrible atrocities in London might have been different if someone had taken him in hand earlier on in his life.

The man born blind comes away with two healings. His physical blindness is cured but more importantly he receives spiritual enlightenment when he openly declares his belief in Jesus and worships Him as Lord.

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, not 'whatever you think yourself' sort of religion.

Some feel more at home with a God who would keep 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". The Lord doesn't play games with us. Salvation involves clearly distinguishing truth from falsehood, light from darkness. Jesus doesn't lead us up a blind alleyway.

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.