

Lent 4B

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. Lent is the time for doing this.

St. John's gospel draws quite a bit on the themes of light and darkness where Light symbolises faith and darkness the absence of it. The battle between these two is dramatically brought out during the trial and passion of Jesus. When Judas left the room of the last supper scripture tells us 'night had fallen' and Satan entered him. The powers of darkness pinned their hopes on His death being the end of Him. But they were wide of the mark. In His Death and Resurrection he shares his victory over sin and Satan with us by atoning 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 we come to our senses we often feel ashamed at what we did or said. But if we come into the light and confess our sins the Lord drains all the shame of our sins away. If we have no desire to change then we are opting to stay in the darkness like the enemies of Jesus did.

Jesus says: *'those who live by the truth come out into the light'*. We talk about the light of Truth and the light of conscience. We

will be judged on how we follow those lights. So it is important we examine our conscience in the light of the **Ten Commandments**. They're not ten suggestions. They are based on the Natural Law which is built into our human nature. But because our human nature is damaged by Original Sin we need to inform our conscience regarding what's right or wrong in line with the Church's teaching on important moral issues and not rely solely on our own judgement. Jesus says 'he who listens to the Church, listens to Him'. Otherwise we might end up with an ill-informed or erroneous conscience and be led astray. Fallen human nature on its own has a tendency to follow the course of least resistance when deciding what's right or wrong. That's the problem.

As 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 without compromise, to their children and helping them to live by it.

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. If our lives in the here and now are guided by the light of truth our lives in the hereafter will bask in the sunshine of His love.