

John's Gospel and there is much to reflect on. Use it in your prayer this coming week, and as you read it, ask the Lord to come close to you, and 'to open your eyes' to his glory.

a/ Notice how Jesus meets the blind man as he left the Temple area, where he had celebrated the feast of Tabernacles; a Jewish feast that commemorated Israel's entry into the Promised Land, with a renewed yearning for the coming of the Messiah. It is in this context that Jesus reveals himself: "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life".

b/ Notice also how the actual healing is very brief, just three verses, but it provokes a whole series of reactions and questions, during which Jesus is subjected to a trial and the man born blind gradually comes to faith: He doesn't ask for healing, it is God's Grace at work. Initially, he refuses to say anything, but then he acknowledges Jesus, first to be a prophet, then coming from God, and finally with the simple act of profession "I believe".

The man born blind becomes capable of sight, not only in the literal sense, but also in a spiritual sense, for he recognises the Lord.

#### **Prayer over the Offerings**

We place before you with joy these offerings, which bring eternal remedy, O Lord, praying that we may both faithfully revere them and present them to you, as is fitting, for the salvation of all the world.

#### **Communion Antiphon**

*The Lord anointed my eyes: I went, I washed,  
I saw and I believed in God.*

#### **Prayer after Communion**

O God, who enlighten everyone who comes into this world, illuminate our hearts, we pray, with the splendour of your grace, that we may always ponder what is worthy and pleasing to your majesty and love you in all sincerity.

#### **Prayer over the People**

Look upon those who call to you, O Lord, and sustain the weak; give life by your unfailing light to those who walk in the shadow of death, and bring those rescued by your mercy from every evil to reach the highest good. Through Christ our Lord.

## **Fourth Sunday of Lent**

### ***Laetare (Rejoice) Sunday***

**15<sup>th</sup> March 2026**

#### ***Coming Alive in Christ ~ Our Journey to Easter***

Today, we have the second of three Gospels from St John telling of people coming to life in Christ. Like last week, this Gospel is followed by the Prayer of Exorcism, prayed over those who are to be received into the Church at Easter. Let us make this prayer our own this Lent: *Father of mercy, you helped the man born blind to believe in your Son and through that faith to reach the light of your Kingdom. Free your children from the falsehood that surround and blind us. Let truth be the foundation of our lives. May we live in your light for ever. Lord Jesus, you are the true light that enlighten all people. By the Spirit of truth, free all who struggle under the yoke of sin. Grant that we may enjoy your light like the man whose sight you once restored, and inspire us to become fearless witnesses to the faith, for you are Lord for ever and ever.*

#### **Entrance Antiphon**

*Rejoice, Jerusalem, and all who love her. Be joyful, all who were in mourning; exult and be satisfied at her consoling breast.*

#### **Collect**

O God, who through your Word reconcile the human race to yourself in a wonderful way, grant, we pray, that with prompt devotion and eager faith the Christian people may hasten toward the solemn celebrations to come.

#### **1 SAMUEL 16: 1. 6-7, 10-13**

The LORD said to Samuel, 'Fill your horn with oil, and go. I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.'

When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, 'Surely the LORD' anointed is before him.' But the LORD said to Samuel, 'Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.' And Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, 'The LORD has not chosen these.' Then Samuel said to Jesse, 'Are all your sons here?' And he said, 'There remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep.' And Samuel said to Jesse, 'Send and get him, for we will not sit down till he comes here.' And he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. And the LORD said, 'Arise, anoint him, for this is he.' Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David from that day forward.

#### **THE WORD OF THE LORD**

In today's First Reading, we continue listening to the history of salvation, with the election and anointing of David. David is the founder of the dynasty from which the Messiah, whom he prefigures, will be born. Notice how God chooses the weak, so that his own strength may be seen.

#### **PSALM: 23(22):1-3 - 4. 5. 6**

**Response:** *The LORD is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.*

The LORD is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want. Fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose. Near restful waters he leads me; he revives my soul.

He guides me along the right path, for the sake of his name. Though I should walk in the valley of the shadow of death, no evil would I fear, for you are with me. Your crook and your staff will give me comfort.

You have prepared a table before me in the sight of my foes.  
My head you have anointed with oil; my cup is overflowing.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.

In the LORD's own house shall I dwell for length of days unending.

#### **EPHESIANS 5: 8-14**

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, and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, 'Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.' **THE WORD OF THE LORD**

In the early Church, baptism was known as 'Illumination' and the following refrain would have been sung as the newly baptised emerged from the waters: "*Wake up from your sleep, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you*". Paul reminds the Ephesians that faith and Baptism rescued them from the darkness of sin and introduced them into the light of Christ. They are no longer blinded by the darkness of ignorance. So, he urges them to live lives that reflect the light of Christ they have received.

**Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus. I am the light of the world, says the Lord; whoever follows me will have the light of life.**

**Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus.**

#### **JOHN 9: 1-41 (extract)**

Jesus spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud and said to him, 'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam' (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing. . . Jesus said. 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' He answered, 'And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?' Jesus said to him, 'You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you.' He said, 'Lord, I believe', and he worshipped him. **THE GOSPEL OF THE LORD**

John always refers to Jesus' miracles as 'signs', a word emphasizing the significance of the action rather than the marvel itself. The Healing of the man born blind is one of the seven 'signs' given by Jesus, revealing his divinity and announcing God's reign. It occupies a very important place in