

St Joseph's and St Patrick's

Diocese of Leeds Registered Charity No. 249404

Barnoldswick, Earby and District

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THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

(Laetare Sunday)

22nd March 2020

The Bishops of England and Wales have decided to cease having public liturgies in our churches and chapels. Since the Church finds herself in this difficult situation because of the Corona Virus, the obligation for the faithful to attend Mass on a Sunday or Holy Day of Obligation is removed until further notice.

Celebration of Mass.

Priests should continue to celebrate Mass in the church without the presence of the people on a daily basis. The continuing celebration of Mass ensures that the people can join in Spiritual Communion with the priests of the Church.

An Act of Spiritual Communion

(which can be said at home or face-to-face with Jesus in the tabernacle):

My Jesus, I believe that you are truly present in the Most Holy Sacrament.

I love you above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul.

Since I cannot today receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart.

I embrace You as being already there and unite myself wholly to You.

Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

(St Alphonsus Liguori)

The Church will open over the weekend for individuals to pray on their own without any organised services and make devotions before the Blessed Sacrament.

Baptisms will be deferred until public health advice regarding congregations has returned to normal. In an emergency, baptisms can take place with the relevant precautions.

Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) can be offered on request providing there is sufficient distance between the priest and the penitent.

First Reconciliation and Holy Communion have been postponed.

Anointing of the Sick can take place with various precautions.

Funerals. The funeral service should take place at the graveside or crematorium. Arrangements should be celebrated 'in memoriam' at a time in due course when congregations are allowed to gather.

Lived-streamed celebration of Mass

In our Diocese:

St Edwards, Wetherby - www.mcnmedia.tv/camera/st-edward-king-confessor-church-clifford-wetherby

St Mary's Halifax – <https://www.stmaryshalifax.com>

There is Mass every day at 12.00 noon from the Church of Our Lady of Walsingham in Norfolk – live or later – link <http://www.walsingham.org.uk/live-stream>

Daily Mass and other devotions can be accessed through EWTN television channel. These can be seen online <https://www.ewtn.com/>

On the website entitled 'Universalis' you can read the Mass readings and the Daily prayer of the Church, which all priests pray every day.

Please think about using your rosary and Stations of the Cross (available for sale on the piety stall).

National Call to Prayer: Churches in England are inviting everyone on Sunday (22nd March) to put a candle in the window and pray at 7.00 p.m.

Arrangements for both St Joseph's and St Patrick's churches to be open for private prayer before the Blessed Sacrament:

St Joseph's during the week 11.00 a.m.- 1.00 p.m. Saturday 5.00 p.m. – 6.30 p.m.

Sunday 10.00 a.m. – 12.00 noon.

St Patrick's: during the week – to be arranged. Sunday 8.45 a.m.

"The SVP is willing to do what it can during this period of great worry to alleviate people's concerns and offer practical help where appropriate. However, we do not want to place our own members at risk, particularly those of advanced years and underlying medical conditions, and we will look at the risks of any help we are asked to offer. At the moment, we are in a position to offer to do shopping and run essential errands. If any member of the parish, particularly those over 70 who have no family support, is concerned about getting shopping and cannot access supermarket and pharmacy delivery systems, please do contact Father Firth through the usual parish phone number and he will re-direct your request to the SVP. If you leave a message, please leave a phone number where you can be contacted. Please also remember we may not be able to do what you want immediately it may take a few days and if we are inundated with requests, we may have to decline some. Several of our members themselves will not be available because of their own condition. We will not promise to do everything but will do what we can."

If you would like to receive the weekly bulletin regularly, please contact Anne Wood Tel: 07882831159

Pope Francis' prayer to the Virgin for protection

**O Mary, you shine continuously on our journey
as a sign of salvation and hope.**

We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick.

At the foot of the Cross you participated in Jesus' pain, with steadfast faith.

You, Salvation of the Roman People, know what we need.

**We are certain that you will provide, so that, as you did at Cana of Galilee,
joy and feasting might return after this moment of trial.**

Help us, Mother of Divine Love,

to conform ourselves to the Father's will and to do what Jesus tells us:

**He who took our sufferings upon Himself, and bore our sorrows to bring us,
through the Cross, to the joy of the Resurrection.**

Amen.

We seek refuge under your protection, O Holy Mother of God.

**Do not despise our pleas — we who are put to the test —
and deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin.**

Special Prayers

Lillian Price – Jennie Hendley – Jim Kelly – Marie & Bob Fletcher – Stanley Bajkowski – Maggi (Peggy) Tullett – Mary Posiko – Margaret DeVito – Phyllis Kirrage – Val Kaynell – Mark Hoare – Dale McLaughlin – Marie Keating – Max Hudson – Peter Catley – Stan Nelson – Paul Wood – Tony Atherton – Jennifer Purcell – Alice Brookes – Pat Maloney – Clifford Ball – Mandy McLaughlan.

Please pray for these and for the comfort of anyone suffering in any way. Please also remember the

Airedale Hospital Chaplain: If you require Fr Michael McLaughlin please phone 01535 653153

St Joseph's Community Centre: Please contact 01282 814934

**PASTORAL MESSAGE TO THE CLERGY, RELIGIOUS AND LAY FAITHFUL
DIOCESE OF LEEDS, LAETARE SUNDAY, THE 4TH SUNDAY OF LENT, MARCH 2020**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I am sure that you, like me, will be troubled by the threat to human life resulting from the Covid-19 Coronavirus pandemic. We will be unsettled too by the unprecedented measures which all of us have a duty to undertake to contain and stop this threat.

Yet the Church's liturgy today, 'Laetare' Sunday, tells us to rejoice! The entrance antiphon for today's Mass invites us: "Rejoice, Jerusalem, and all who love her. Be joyful, all who were in mourning." (Is 66: 10)

We might think, what a strange sentiment for us to express at this moment in time, given that so great a number of people worldwide are experiencing anxiety, and many are suffering and dying. How can we rejoice when the normal locations and familiar occasions for working together, for meeting one another, and for socialising with others are now places and moments which present potential harm to our health and well-being?

For the first time also, in living memory, the public celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass has been suspended in Jerusalem, in Rome, in our country and, indeed, in many other nations. In witnessing these events, it can seem that a time of darkness and isolation is about to overshadow and oppress us. Why then should we rejoice?

Today's Gospel tells us why. The Lord Jesus heals a man blind from birth. The blind man is taken out of his darkness and the social isolation he endured begging on the streets. Now he is able to see not just the natural light but discovers the supernatural light of faith. Jesus reveals himself as the "light of the world" (John 8:12); he offers a way out of darkness and the isolation it can bring.

The reason that we rejoice as Christians, even in times of great anxiety and suffering, even when we "walk in the valley of darkness" (Psalm 22(23):4), is the faith, hope and love which has been revealed and given to us in Jesus Christ, the light of the world.

In the passion and death of Christ, anxiety, suffering and death have been overcome; this is our faith. In the resurrection and ascension of Christ, darkness has been banished; this is our hope. In the promise of Christ to send and give us the Holy Spirit to be with us forever, we know that we are never alone; this is the love which unites us with him and together as one.

At this time though, there is much fear and anxiousness in our world. There is also much generosity and dedication being shown, particularly by those caring in different ways for the sick. The serious threat to people's health and the social challenges which we face now are one of those moments in time which can bring out both the best and the worst of human nature. The acts of kindness, generosity and self-sacrifice of a great many people can, sadly, be mirrored by the lack of concern, meanness and selfishness of others.

The light given to us in the life and teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ reveals to us not just the best of human nature; it heals, restores and renews in us the fullness of our human nature. The Letter to the Ephesians tells us about the consequences of this: "You were darkness once, but now you are light in the Lord; be like children of light, for the effects of the light are seen in complete goodness and right living and truth".

How do we express that goodness, right living and truth, if not in the care, concern and love we show to others, particularly those who are most vulnerable and isolated. We may think that because of the necessary constrictions on our movements in the weeks ahead that there is little we can do or contribute to help others. But this is not so! As Christians we have much to offer at this time.

Even though we are temporarily unable to come together to participate physically in the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, we can still raise our minds, hearts and hands to God and offer him our sacrifice of prayer. Our love for God should lead us to make an Act of Spiritual Communion, to desire his presence within us and thank him for the gift of life he has given to us. Our love for our neighbour should lead us to offer prayers of intercession for the Church, for the world and, particularly at this time, for the sick and those who care for them.

We can demonstrate practical care for each other too. As Cardinal Nichols has said in his recent letter addressed on behalf of all the bishops to the members of the Catholic Church in England and Wales, "There are so many ways in which we are to do this: being attentive to the needs of our neighbour, especially the elderly and vulnerable; contributing to our local food banks; volunteering for charitable initiatives and organisations; simply keeping in touch by all the means open to us".

The light of Christ enables us to see as God would have us see. So today, on this Laetare Sunday, united as members of the one Body of Christ, let us rejoice in the light of faith which has been given to us. Let us place our hope in the power of the Lord to heal, restore and renew all things, and let our love be made manifest in our prayer and in our goodness to those around us.

Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Unfailing Help, may the Lord Jesus Christ, the Light of the World, bless you and your family, 'guide you along the right path' and 'give you comfort' now and in the time ahead.

+ Marcus

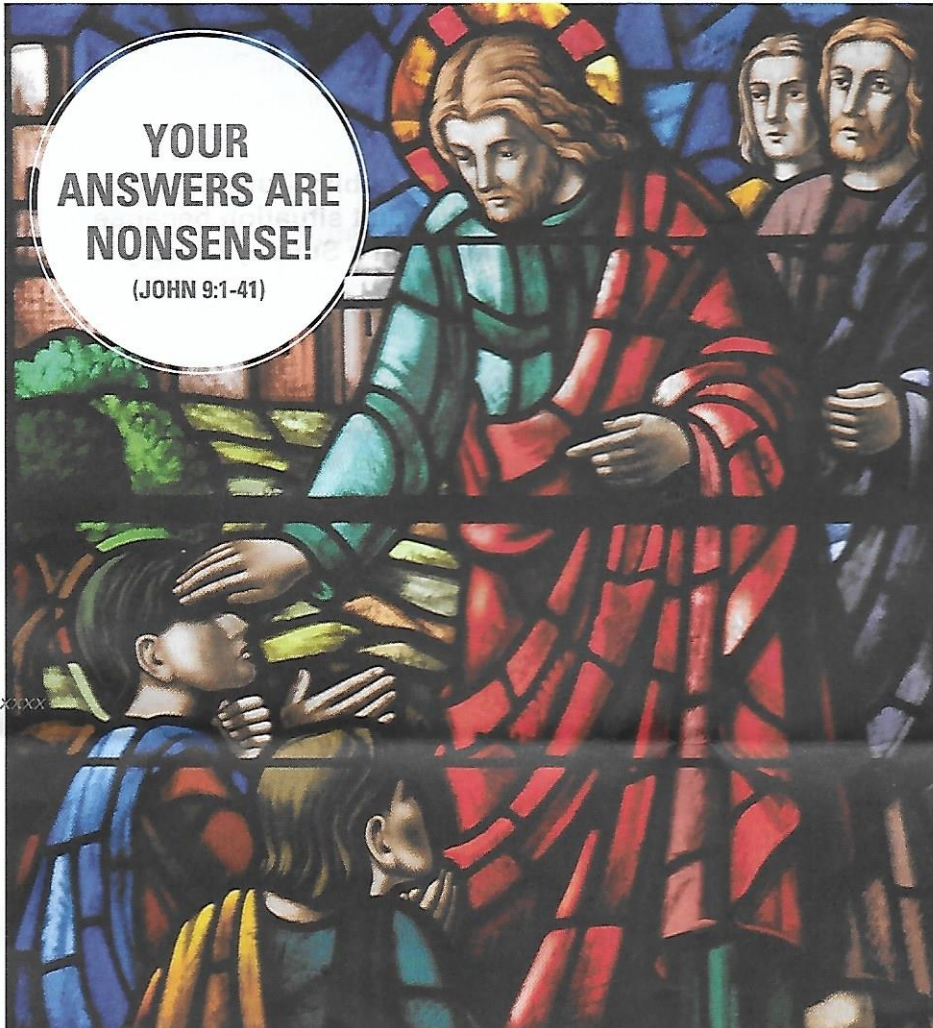
✠ Marcus Stock
Bishop of Leeds

Given at Leeds on the 19th March 2020, the Solemnity of St Joseph, and appointed to be read at the celebrations of Mass to be live-streamed from churches, published on the diocesan and parish websites, and made available in print in all churches, chapels and religious communities of the Diocese on the 4th Sunday of Lent, 2020.

Sunday Message

THE WORD

Year A • Psalter Week 4



The story of the man born blind is regarded as one of the best-written narratives in the scriptures.

The healing by Jesus leads to the person coming to faith in him by clinging to his own experience in the face of challenges from the highly educated religious authorities. All that the man in question knows is that Jesus has cured him, and so cannot be a sinner, whether he has acted on the sabbath or not. By remaining true to his convictions, his appreciation of Jesus deepens, from being the man called Jesus, to a prophet and, finally, Lord, and worshipping him. The leaders remain true to their convictions, but these lead them deeper into unbelief. Their initial efforts to disprove the healing fail, so they argue from theology: because Jesus does not keep the sabbath, he cannot be from God. They cannot match the arguments of their irrepressible opponent so end up resorting to insult and excommunication.

It is by remaining faithful to his own experience and rejecting seemingly logical arguments from the religious authorities that the former blind man finds himself in the presence of Jesus and makes his act of faith. This is the culmination of a gradual process in understanding, and an example of how a person can come to faith in Jesus. ■

DO

If you can see, thank the Lord for your ability. Give some of your Lenten alms to a charity for the blind.

SAY

I am the light of the world, says the Lord
(John 9:5)

REFLECT

Some people imagine that the Gospels simply relate historical events which have little bearing on the present day. This applies especially to those who imagine they understand fully how God operates, people who devise a theological system and feel that everything is now worked out: Jesus' criticism of the religious authorities of his day cannot possibly apply to those of our own. But the Bible warns us that this is a dangerous way of thinking. The book of Job is the classic critique of conventional theological wisdom.

The Gospel passage today is a masterpiece, comical in places, of the (formally) uneducated person who defeats the theologically qualified simply by pointing out the flaws in their argument. The most telling comment about the religious authorities in the story (and sometimes in our own day) is that they simply will not listen to the story of other people whose experience does not fit with their well-worked-out abstract theories. They accuse the healed man – and, implicitly, his parents – of being in bad faith, instead of thinking, maybe we should look at this again.

It is by not accepting the easy answers but by remaining true to himself and his experience that the person in the story, who represents anyone in a similar position, comes to true belief in Jesus. Unless we examine what we believe, we will not grow in our faith and understanding of Jesus and our relationship with him. This is not to doubt the truth: it is saying that the way we understand it has to change as we do. Pope St John XXIII famously said that the deposit of faith is one thing: the way it is presented is another. Yesterday's answers may not be sufficient for today's questions. ■

LEARN

The expression "the Jews" in the Fourth Gospel usually applies to the religious leaders, not to the people as a whole.

The Pharisees feature in the story today: the term is interchangeable with the Jews.

Both groups are presented as being opposed to Jesus.

FIRST READING 1 Samuel 16:1.6-7.10-13

A reading from the first book of Samuel.

The Lord said to Samuel: "Fill your horn with oil and go. I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem, for I have chosen myself a king among his sons." When Samuel arrived, he caught sight of Eliab and thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed one stands there before him," but the Lord said to Samuel, "Take no notice of his appearance or his height for I have rejected him; God does not see as man sees; man looks at appearances but the Lord looks at the heart." Jesse presented his seven sons to Samuel, but Samuel said to Jesse, "The Lord has not chosen these." He then answered, "Are these all the sons you have?" He answered, "There is still one left, the youngest; he is out looking after the sheep." Then Samuel said to Jesse, "Send for him; we will not sit down to eat until he comes." Jesse had him sent for, a boy of fresh complexion, with fine eyes and pleasant bearing. The Lord said, "Come, anoint him, for this is the one." At this, Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him where he stood with his brothers; and the spirit of the Lord seized on David and stayed with him from that day on.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 22

Response:

**The Lord is my shepherd;
there is nothing I shall want.**

1. 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,
to revive my drooping spirit. (R.)
2. He guides me along the right path;
he is true to his name.
If I should walk in the valley of darkness
no evil would I fear.
You are there with your crook and your
staff;
with these you give me comfort. (R.)
3. You have prepared a banquet for me
in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil;
my cup is overflowing. (R.)
4. Surely goodness and kindness shall
follow me
all the days of my life.
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell
for ever and ever. (R.)

SECOND READING Ephesians 5:8-14

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians.

You were darkness once, but now you are light in the Lord; be like children of light, for the effects of the light are seen in complete goodness and right living and truth. Try to discover what the Lord wants of you, having nothing to do with the futile works of darkness but exposing them by contrast. The things which are done in secret are things that people are ashamed even to speak of; but anything exposed by the light will be illuminated and anything illuminated turns into light. That is why it is said:

Wake up from your sleep,
rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Glorify to you, O Christ, you are the Word of God!

**I am the light of the world, says the Lord;
anyone who follows me will have the light of life.**

Glorify to you, O Christ, you are the Word of God!

GOSPEL

John 9:1-41

(For shorter form read between ><)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

>As Jesus went along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth.< His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, for him to have been born blind?" "Neither he nor his parents sinned," Jesus answered "he was born blind so that the works of God might be displayed in him.

"As long as the day lasts
I must carry out the work of the one who sent me;
the night will soon be here when no one can work.

As long as I am in the world
I am the light of the world."

Having said this, >he spat on the ground, made a paste with the spittle, put this over the eyes of the blind man, and said to him, "Go and wash in the Pool of Siloam" (a name that means "sent"). So the blind man went off and washed himself, and came away with his sight restored.

His neighbours and people who earlier had seen him begging said, "Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?" Some said, "Yes, it is the same one." Others said, "No, he only looks like him." The man himself said, "I am the man."< So they said to him, "Then how do your eyes come to be open?" "The man called Jesus" he answered "made a paste, daubed my eyes with it and said to me, 'Go and wash at Siloam'; so I went, and when I washed I could see." They asked, "Where is he?" "I don't know" he answered.

>They brought the man who had been blind to the Pharisees. It had been a sabbath day when Jesus made the paste and opened the man's eyes, so when the Pharisees asked him how he had come to see, he said, "He put a paste on my eyes, and I washed, and I can see." Then some of the Pharisees said, "This man cannot be from God: he does not keep the sabbath." Others said, "How could a sinner produce signs like this?" And there was disagreement among them. So they spoke to the blind man again, "What have you to say about him yourself, now that he has opened your eyes?" "He is a prophet" replied the man.<

However, the Jews would not believe that the man had been blind and had gained his sight, without first sending for his parents and asking them, "Is this man really your son who you say was born blind? If so, how is it that he is now able to see?" His parents answered, "We know he is our son and we know he was born blind, but we don't know how it is that he can see now, or who opened his eyes. He is old enough: let him speak for himself." His

parents spoke like this out of fear of the Jews, who had already agreed to expel from the synagogue anyone who should acknowledge Jesus as the Christ. This was why his parents said, "He is old enough; ask him."

So the Jews again sent for the man and said to him, "Give glory to God! For our part, we know that this man is a sinner." The man answered, "I don't know if he is a sinner; I only know that I was blind and now I can see." They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" He replied, "I have told you once and you wouldn't listen. Why do you want to hear it all again? Do you want to become his disciples too?" At this they hurled abuse at him: "You can be his disciple," they said "we are disciples of Moses: we know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this man, we don't know where he comes from." The man replied, "Now here is an astonishing thing! He has opened my eyes, and you don't know where he comes from! We know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but God does listen to men who are devout and do his will. Ever since the world began it is unheard of for anyone to open the eyes of a man who was born blind; if this man were not from God, he couldn't do a thing."> "Are you trying to teach us," they replied "and you a sinner through and through, since you were born!" And they drove him away.

Jesus heard they had driven him away, and when he found him he said to him, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" "Sir," the man replied "tell me who he is so that I may believe in him." Jesus said, "You are looking at him; he is speaking to you." The man said, "Lord, I believe," and worshipped him.<

Jesus said:
"It is for judgement
that I have come into this world,
so that those without sight may see
and those with sight turn blind."

Hearing this, some Pharisees who were present said to him, "We are not blind, surely?" Jesus replied:

"Blind? If you were,
you would not be guilty,
but since you say, 'We see',
your guilt remains."

>The Gospel of the Lord.<
Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

**I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,**
(all bow during the next two lines)

**who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the
Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living
and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.
Amen.**

