



FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT
SUNDAY 19TH MARCH 2023

“The man said, ‘Lord, I believe’, and worshipped him”

Characteristic of St John’s Gospel is the fact that the story operates at several different levels. There is the obvious recounting of the facts of a simple story and then there is the deeper theological message that gives real meaning to the story.

Initially the story begins with the disciples trying to understand who is to blame for the man’s blindness. It was commonly understood that someone with a serious ailment could attribute it to the sins of their forebears. Sickness and disability were equated with God’s displeasure and therefore regarded as a punishment. In today’s passage Jesus sweeps this misconception aside and turns the popular perception on its head, saying that the man’s blindness will be used to show the glory of the Lord, not the Lord’s displeasure.

The story progresses as one might expect: a man has been born blind, Jesus restores his sight, people doubt he was blind in the first place, an investigation takes place, people struggle to understand what has happened. Apart from Jesus, the only person in the story who really understands what has happened is the blind man himself. Although his understanding comes gradually. St John is not concerned primarily with the man’s physical blindness and subsequent enlightenment.

Gradually the man understands. When he is first asked who cured him, he says. “The man called Jesus”. When the Pharisees question him, and ask what he has to say about Jesus, he replies, “He is a prophet”. Finally, when Jesus speaks with the man, the man born blind comes to the knowledge that Jesus is Lord and he makes his profession of faith, “Lord, I believe”.

St John recognises that each member of the Christian community struggles with spiritual blindness during their spiritual journey. Coming to know the Lord can be an instantaneous experience, like that of St Paul. However, for most of the believing faithful it is a gradual process of fully appreciating and understanding the Lord’s place and power in our lives.

Often we are so familiar with the prayers of the Mass that we can automatically and with ease make our profession of faith. The words “Lord”, “Son of God” and other titles readily fall from our lips, but are they born out of a real knowledge of Jesus or are they more formulaic? The man born blind has no previous knowledge of Jesus or his true identity, but meeting Jesus changes his life and his outlook on life and its purpose. His belief in Jesus and his acceptance of Jesus as Lord mean that he will never be the same again.

We have a head start on the man born blind, as we know Jesus and his true identity; however, our discipleship may be hampered by spiritual blindness and that blindness may affect our ability to call Jesus Lord and worship him. Let us ask the Lord to open our eyes to the areas of our lives that stunt our spiritual growth and knowledge. It may be that we are selfish, prejudiced, hypocritical, lacking compassion and so forth and yet do not see it and therefore are not able to worship the Lord as we would like.

Today's Gospel gives us encouragement, as it is a reminder that the spiritual journey is a process always directed towards enlightenment. It is gradual and as we progress along the way we gain ever more insight into ourselves and into the Lord. If we engage with it seriously and sincerely, the Lord will remove our lack of vision from us and one day we shall see him face to face.

Fourth Sunday of Lent Sunday 19th March (Cycle A)

Parish Diary

Sunday Masses	10.00 am & 6.30 pm
Weekday Masses	9.00 am
Wednesdays	9.00 am – Eucharistic Service – Office Closed
Friday	Adoration following 9.00 am Mass
Holy Days of Obligation	9.30am & 7.30pm
Confessions	Saturdays 9.30 am - 10.00 am
Legion of Mary	After Sunday morning mass (11.30 am onwards)
Baptisms	By Appointment (Saturdays 12.00 pm - 12.30 pm)

Liturgical Calendar

Sunday 19 th March	Fourth Sunday of Lent (A) (‘Laetare’ Sunday)
Monday 20 th March	St Joseph, husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary – Solemnity
Saturday 25 th March	The Annunciation of the Lord – Solemnity
Sunday 26 th March	Fifth Sunday of Lent (A)

Masses & Intentions This Week

Sunday 19 th March	10.00 am	Donal Hayes – RIP/1 st Anni (donor – The Family)
	6.30 pm	For Parishioners
Monday 20 th March	9.00 am	Christine Moran – RIP (donor – E Kyte)
Tuesday 21 st March	9.00 am	Domingo Hernandez – RIP
Wednesday 22 nd March	9.00 am	Eucharistic Service
Thursday 23 rd March	9.00 am	Margaret Duffy – RIP (donor E Kyte)
Friday 24 th March	9.00 am	
Saturday 25 th March	7.30 pm	Stations of the Cross/Mass
	9.00 am	Anthony Soares – RIP/Anniversary (donor – Scully/Soares Families)
Sunday 26 th March	10.00 am	Maura Meadway – RIP/Birthday (donor – Mandy Meadway)
	6.30 pm	For Parishioners

The Season of Lent

Fridays in Lent

During the Season of Lent, we normally have Friday morning mass at 9am and evening mass with Stations of the Cross beginning at 7.30pm. All are warmly encouraged to participate in this traditional practise.

Parish Notice Board

Birthday Celebrations – Thank you

I can't fully express how immensely happy and loved you all made me feel last Sunday for my birthday celebrations. A big thank you to the Social Committee for organising such a wonderful spread of food/drinks and to all who made such delicious dishes to share. Many thanks also for your cards and gifts, you made my 60th birthday memorable.

Social Committee

We are planning on having a raffle this Easter for the Church's fund raising.

We will be selling £1 ticket for the raffle every Sunday. The draw will be on Easter Sunday 9th April.

Baptisms

Please be aware that couples requiring their child to be Baptised are required by the priest to first set the time for talks with a Catechist and this cannot under any circumstances be dispensed with. Couples who have had the preparation talks will then see the priest before the Baptism takes place. Please also contact the office so that a form can be sent for completion.

Children's Liturgy

The Children's Liturgy is now up and running during 10am mass every Sunday. Please encourage your children to join this group which is open to children aged 4 and above. It is a very relaxed and fun group to help your child along their path of faith.

Parish Finance:

Weekly Collection

The collection for 12.3.23 is as follows:

Main collection: £360.68 (Envelopes: £128, LP £232.68)

Second collection (Lent Fast Day) £20

Total banked: £680.68

Catholic Newspaper

The March edition of the Catholic Newspaper is available at the back of the Church. Please help yourself if you wish.

Communication Desk

Pope Francis' Message For Lent

The Holy Father's Message for Lent is now widely available. The Press Conference held in Rome to present the Message to the Church can be viewed online at

<https://www.youtube.com/c/VaticanNews>

Gidea Park Talk On The Holy Eucharist

On Wednesday 22nd March at 7 pm in the church hall at Christ the Eternal High Priest, Gidea Park, Fr Adrian Graffy, parish priest and Member of the Pope's Biblical Commission, will

Speak about the Eucharist. The talk, entitled *Do this in memory of me*, will examine the New Testament material, and trace the understanding of the Eucharist through the centuries, including the latest teaching of Pope Francis. This talk is in person, and can also be followed live stream by going to www.whatgoodnews.org

60-Years of Campion

A musical celebration to be held on Wednesday 22nd March, please see noticeboard for details.

The Divine Mercy Apostolate, London

Is holding a Divine Mercy Lenten Retreat on Saturday 25 March 2023 from 1:30 pm - 4:30 pm at St Mary Mother of God, 213 Hornchurch Road, Hornchurch, Essex RM12 4TF

The Retreat will include teachings on the Message of Mercy, Stations of the Cross, Holy Mass, Hour of Mercy with Adoration and Benediction and Veneration of the Image of Merciful Jesus. All Welcome. Please call Millie on 07957594646 for more information

Lent Mass Readings

All the readings for the Masses of Lent, with a short commentary by Fr Adrian Gaffy, can be found on www.whatgoodnews.org Click on 'Scripture Readings' and then 'Lent Readings'.

Please Pray for the Sick and Housebound in our Parish:

Alice Briody, John Buckley, Maureen Chaliss, Anna Heneghan, Brenda Humphreys, Pat Lark, George Malaj, Margaret, Eileen McCaffery, Sheila McCurdy, Sheila Murphy, Sheila Nugent, Mary O'Hagan, Rachel, Pradeepan Ragunathan, Mary Scully, Greta Street, Voni Tesi, Rose Yates, Claire Ryan in Emerson Court.

Anniversaries Occurring at this time – February/March

Michael Butler, Pauline Carroll, May Coleman, Nancy Cronin, Oliver Fant, Kathy Forsythe, Donal Hayes, Sue Jones, Kathleen Kenealey, Pat Kivneen, Agatha Linton, Maura Meadway, James Medlin, Peter Murray, Margaret O'Connell, Ann O'Leary, Bridget O'Leary, John Passet, Ann Russell, Justin Selvakumar, Eamonn Shanahan, James Smith, Anthony Soares, Grace Walsh, David Ward, Vincent Wright

Parish Priest: Fr Britto Belevendran, (01708 507020)
Parish Administrator: Daphne Thomas, Mon, Tues, Thurs & Fri (10am-1pm) (01708 507020)
Pastoral Team Leader: Graham Daniels (07542 588763)
Steward of the Gospel: Mandy Meadway (07801 470516)
Parish Finance: Mrs Stephanie Mallen (07983 962465)
Diocesan Safeguarding Representative: Katie Nash (07825 293308)
Hall & Lounge Bookings: English Martyrs Parish Office (01708 507020)
Church & Hall Caretaker: Mike Dineen (07415 727926)
Legion of Mary: Michael Okafor (07956 586370)

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