

Gospel Reading for Sunday, 22nd March 2020

John 9: 1 - 41 Jesus heals the man who was born blind

How the world has changed in the last days and weeks, or at least its fragility has been exposed.

What seemed so certain a month ago has become less sure, our interconnectedness and dependency has become obvious but only because they are now threatened. Our decisions and that of our government now have revealed how important everyone is in the systems that rule our lives.

The gospel story this week is about a blind man whose sight is restored by Jesus using his spit and mud, and asking him to wash in the pool of Siloam. A simple act - but work on the Sabbath! It was only after this that the man's neighbours saw who he really was - not the man whose blindness they thought was caused by his or his parent's sin - but a man who had been liberated. The religious hierarchy only saw the sinner: no one expressed joy at his sight being restored. Their attitude represented a sinister blindness.

We often see only what we want to see in people. No-one on that day rejoiced with the man, or was glad, but the blind man called Jesus 'Lord' - Jesus was truly seen by him. Jesus true identity to his disciples was only revealed after his resurrection.

Whatever the day, Jesus comes to bring light and hope to those whose eyes who first refuse to see but now are ready to see. In these difficult days can we begin to see and appreciate the people we have always taken for granted, whose gifts we can now celebrate? Are we able to extend love across distances instead of hoarding what we have? Will we have eyes to see other's needs even as we practise this long period of quarantine? Can we remember that we are God's church, his hands and feet and voice, whatever our current restrictions? Let us not yield to despair - The God of Hope is with us. Are we able to soften and cherish the ground we stand on and see again the true light of the Lord and give thanks?

And for Mother's Day may we reflect on our calling to love, nurture and remember all who will be separated from their loved ones wherever they are; and whether they are single or not, man or woman they may find Christ's love in the world. We pray that wherever we can and by whatever method of communication, we will be able to help to relieve their loneliness and loss believing that better days are to come and that Spring will arrive as part of God's promise.

Thanks to Debbie Thomas -

This prayer can also be found on the District website

A Prayer for the Body of Christ

God of relationship,
you know how much your people love
to gather together to worship you
and to support one another.
Be with all those grieving the loss of familiar rhythms and patterns of life.
Even whilst we are physically separated
help us through your Spirit
to strengthen the ligaments
that hold together the Body of Christ
so that we may continue in our common life together
including all without exception.
And may we continue to be the Body of Christ
not for our own sake
but for the sake of the world that you love so much.
Give us a heart not only for those who need us
but those who need us most.

Amen