

SUNDAY PLUS

God is with us

A Year of the Word

“Before I met him...”

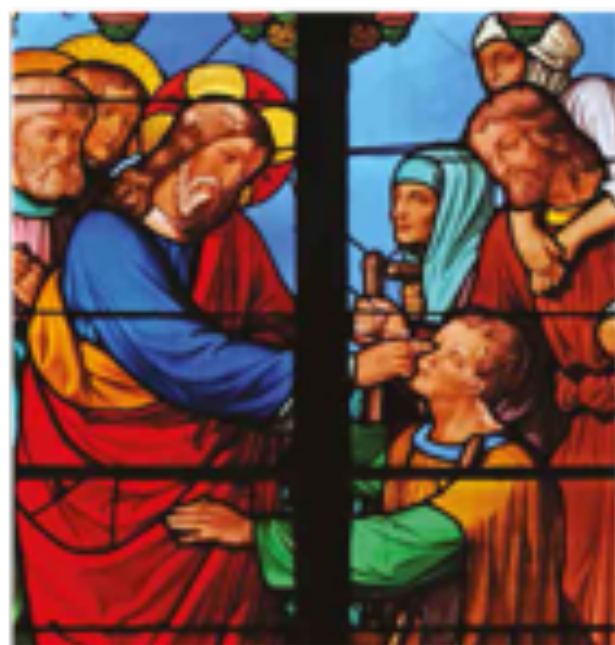


Illustration: Peter J. Schumacher.com

by Fr Denis McBride C.Ss.R.

Imagine you were born, not just visually impaired, but totally blind; that was the only world you knew as a child and adult. Then one day you met a man who touched you and liberated you into the explosive world of colour and shapes and patterns. Now you could see everything. What would you call the man who healed you? What name would you give him?

In today's Gospel we meet a man who was born blind. Following his healing by Jesus he is first interrogated by his neighbours, then by the Pharisees and finally by Jesus himself. We watch as both his confidence and his faith in Jesus grow. To his neighbours he says he was healed by the man called Jesus. To the Pharisees he says he was healed by Jesus the prophet. And when Jesus seeks him out again the

man professes his faith in Jesus as Lord and worships him.

We tend to name people out of our experience of them. If we have a positive experience of people we affirm them when we talk about them, such as: "She rescued my life" or "He really was my saviour". If we have a negative experience of people we may well identify them as undesirable, such as: "That one would wreck your head" or "He is as hard as nails".

The man who said, "One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see" is a brilliant proof of the power of Jesus. If you want to evaluate a teacher, you talk to the students. The evangelists know this: if you want to evaluate Jesus, look at those who have life in his name. They are the best witnesses to who he is.

Fr Denis McBride's many books, CDs and DVDs are available from Redemptionist Publications, www.rpbbooks.co.uk

Start young

by Kasia Greenwood

Today we hear about Jesus healing a blind man. It is one of many stories about Jesus healing sick people during his ministry. These acts reveal to us the great power of God, the benevolence and care God shows to humanity and the reality of Jesus being the Son of God.

As well as the physical act of healing, this story can also lead us to think about times when we are blind and are guided to the light by the Lord. It is only through living in the knowledge of God's love that we can truly see.

In the same way, it is our responsibility to guide our children into that same light. The man in the reading had been blind from birth but had his eyes opened when Jesus came to him. We must not allow our children to be blind to the

love of God, for its presence in their lives is deeply enriching, revealing and enlightening.

Kasia Greenwood is mother to three children and works in education.

"We should ask ourselves: 'Do you speak with Jesus? Do you tell him: Jesus, I believe that you are alive, that you are risen, that you are close to me, that you will not abandon me?... Jesus is always with us, he is always with our problems, with our struggles and with our good works.'"

Pope Francis

Vision unlimited

by Dr Liam Waldron

Whether intentional or not, the song "Love shine a light", a Eurovision Song Contest winner from some years ago, captures the essence of the beautifully hopeful readings today.

The light is that which helps us to see clearly – which gives life and allows us to love others – in contrast to the frivolous distractions of life which yield nothing and keep us in darkness. The move from darkness to light of course happens in Christ who is the light of the world.

The message that God does not see us as we see each other, but rather reads and understands the human heart, seeks to heal it and comes to make a home there, is one that should fill us with hopeful joy. Such is the journey of the man born blind in today's Gospel.

Jesus brings light and life to a man rejected because of his physical blindness, thereby challenging the spiritual blindness of others. We too are called to be children of the light in everything we do.

Intellectual disability: caring for yourself and others, which Dr Liam Waldron co-wrote with Cristina Gangemi, is available from Redemptionist Publications, www.rpbbooks.co.uk

Jesus, I believe in you. I sometimes wander away but I really want you to stay with me and to be patient with my shortcomings, my moaning and my groaning. Help me to count my blessings. Help me to make you part of everything I say, think and do. Amen.

Today:
1 Samuel 16:1-6, 7, 10-13
Ephesians 3:3-14
John 9:1-41

Monday:
Isaiah 60:1-7, 21
John 4:43-54

Tuesday:
Ezekiel 47:1-6, 12
John 5:1-9, 5-16

Wednesday:
Isaiah 7:10-14, 8:10
Hebrews 10:4-10
Luke 1:26-38

Thursday:
Ezekiel 32:7-14
John 5:21-47

Friday:
Isaiah 2:1, 12-22
John 7:1-2, 10, 25-30

Saturday:
Jeremiah 11:16-20
John 7:40-52

Next Sunday:
Ezekiel 37:12-14
Romans 8:8-11
John 11:1-45