

It's both annoying and funny when we miss the obvious. How many times do you look for something and you search high and low, and the longer you search the more annoyed you get? You know it's here somewhere but you're blown if you can find it. Then suddenly you see it – right in front of you in the most obvious place. *The pair of glasses you can't locate - on the end of your nose or the bunch of keys in the door.*

Today's Gospel reading is about a whole lot of people who miss the point and fail to see what is staring them in the face. Jesus mixed some dirt with spit, smeared it on to the eyes of a blind man and told him to go and wash in the Pool of Siloam. The man went off and he came back seeing.

Others can't believe that this was the same man. The man they knew was blind. In fact, he had been *born* blind and had never seen the light of day. Even when the blind man, now healed, says, "*Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing*", the authorities are not convinced. The Pharisees see only the blind man as a sinner, and Jesus as a Sabbath-breaker.

As always in the Gospel of John there is something deeper in the miracle stories for us to delve into. The healed man is not only given *physical* eyesight, but also *spiritual* eyesight. Not only had his eyes seen light for the first time, but he could also see the Light of the Word. Not only had his eyes been opened so that he could now see colour, and people, and trees and flowers, but his eyes had been opened to see Jesus as his Lord. For the once blind man everything was now crystal clear. When Jesus asked him, "*Do you believe in the Son of Man*", he fell at Jesus' feet and confessed, "*I believe, Lord!*"

But the Jewish authorities just didn't get it. They missed the point completely. These learned and pious people claimed to know all there is about God; they believed that they were enlightened but in actual fact they were blind. They did not see the light – the Light of the world – right before their eyes.

I wonder how often we miss the point, and in some sense share the same kind of blindness that the Jewish authorities did. We know the Bible and especially the story of Jesus' death and resurrection, and we know the parables, the miracles and the sayings of Jesus. But it is still possible to be blind to what that all means.

We remain blind so long as we fail to realise the **personal** nature of what Jesus has done. Jesus did all of that for *me* and for *you*. It's not too hard to miss the point of what it means to belong to Christ in an everyday sense. We can pass a whole day without speaking to Jesus in prayer; we can confront all our problems and challenges without turning to him for help;

we can carry on in those things that stand between us and God, believing that our little sins won't set the earth off course in the big scheme of things.

Only when we trust and rely on Jesus as our friend and brother to help us each day to live as children of the light, and to support us in times of trouble, are our eyes really open to Jesus as our Light on our journey through life.

For the early Christians the healing of the man born blind was a symbol of Baptism. Baptism was leaving behind darkness and stepping into the glorious light of God. They realised that their becoming Christians and following Christ was indeed a miracle.

At this very strange and troubling time may we all fix our eyes again on the Saviour, and receive his gift of new life that is staring us in the face.

Intercessions

In union with the whole Church, and uniting our prayers with those of Our Lady and all the saints, let us pray that God may grant us and all mankind his constant help and protection.

Let us pray for those preparing for Baptism, especially Euan: that like the man born blind, they may see the truth and believe in Jesus as Lord.

Lord, in your mercy. **All: Hear our prayer.**

Let us pray that we may all live as children of the light, producing in our lives every kind of goodness in righteousness and truth.

Lord, in your mercy. **All: Hear our prayer.**

Let us pray for those who work in our health service and care homes and those engaged in medical research: that they will be endowed with patience, wisdom, compassion and strength.

Lord, in your mercy. **All: Hear our prayer.**

Let us pray for all mothers, especially for those stretched in patience and love, and those who must watch their children suffer. We pray too for those mothers whose families are unable to be with them today: that the Lord may bless them and give them all they need to fulfil their vocation.

Lord, in your mercy. **All: Hear our prayer.**

Let us pray for the sick, the isolated, the fearful and the bereaved: that the Lord may be the good and gentle shepherd of all who suffer and are passing through a dark valley at this time.

Lord, in your mercy. **All: Hear our prayer.**

Let us pray for the departed, especially for our mothers we love but see no longer, and for those who have fallen victim to the coronavirus: that Christ, the Light of the world, may raise them up to the realm of light and peace in heaven.

Lord, in your mercy. **All: Hear our prayer.**

In a moment of silence let us bring our own petitions before the Lord.

May Mary join her maternal intercession to ours, as we say: Hail Mary...

God of compassion,
you have shown your love for us in Christ.
In the richness of your mercy,
hear our prayers and deepen our faith.
Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.