



Sunday 19th March 2023

Parish Priest: Fr. Steven Rigo **Assistant Priest:** Fr. Martin Tanti

Parish Pastoral Associates: Sandy Starbuck & Sr. Margaret Sapsford

The Partnered Parishes of:

St. Mary's

204 Grimshaw St.,
Greensborough, 3088

Parish: 9435 1543 **Presbytery:** 7036 9329

Email: Greensborough@cam.org.au

Website: www.cam1.org.au/greensborough

Secretaries: Francesca Olofsson & Sharon Prosser

Mass Times

Tuesday to Friday: Mass 9.15am

Saturday: Vigil Mass 6.30pm

Sunday: Mass 8.00am, 10.00am & 5.00pm

Reconciliation Times

Saturday: 5.45pm-6.15pm before evening Mass

Parish School Principal

Mrs. Marisa Matthys **Ph:** 9433 4000 **or Email**
principal@smgreensborough.catholic.edu.au

Sacred Heart & St Peter's

25 Gipson Street,
Diamond Creek 3089

Parish: 9401 6361

Email: DiamondCreek@cam.org.au

Website: www.pol.org.au/diamondcreek

Secretary: Pat Guatta

Mass Times

Wednesday & Friday: Mass 9.15am

St Peter's: 1st & 3rd Saturday 7.15pm

Sunday: Mass 9.00am

Reconciliation Times

Friday: 9.45am to 10.15am

Parish School Principal

Mr. Jim O'Sullivan **Ph:** 9438 1590 **or Email**
principal@shdiamondcreek.catholic.edu.au

St. Thomas the Apostle

251 Diamond Creek Road,
Greensborough Nth 3088

Parish: 9434 7373

Email: greensboroughnorth@cam.org.au

Website: www.pol.org.au/greensboroughnorth

Secretary: Lisa Leahy

Mass Times

Tuesday & Thursday: Mass 9.15am

Saturday: Vigil Mass 6.00pm

Sunday: Mass 10.30am

Reconciliation Times

Saturday: 9.30am to 10.00am

Parish School Principal

Mr David Delaney **Ph:** 9434 4565 **or Email**
principal@stgreensboroughnth.catholic.edu.au

THE CELEBRATION OF MASS IN OUR PARISHES

LENTEN PENITENTIAL SERVICE

7.00pm Wednesday 29th March at St Thomas Church



O God, who through your Word reconcile the human race to yourself in a wonderful way, grant, we pray, that with prompt devotion and eager faith the Christian people may hasten toward the solemn celebrations to come. Fourth Sunday of Lent 19th March 2023.

<https://www.australiancatholics.com.au/reflection-lent-4-year-a>

Sacred Heart, St Mary's & St Thomas the Apostle are all members of the Diamond Valley Deanery.

Diamond Valley Deanery

www.diamondvalleydeanery.org.au

Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne

www.cam.org.au



Our Partnered Parishes respectfully acknowledge the Wurundjeri people who are the traditional custodians of this land and we pay respect to the Elders past and present.

PARTNERED PARISHES NEWS

LENT WEEK FOUR

Open our eyes to see more deeply

Today is the fourth weekend of Lent and we pause to reflect.

In the Gospel today we meet another witness to Jesus as the Son of God. The man was born blind and therefore an outcast and beggar in society. It was believed that his blindness was caused by sin. Jesus sees him and gives him the gift of sight. Under questioning by the Pharisees, who doubt his story, the man reveals a deep faith in his experience, defending Jesus, and for this he is cast out. Jesus finds him and reveals his divinity and the man believes. Through this revelation and his faith, the man's eyes and heart are opened deeply to the grace of God.

There are always those who see and do not believe, who are presented with a path to salvation but because of fear or pride or a closed heart they let this offering go. Let us strive to be like the blind man, open to God and the gift of faith.

'I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.' Psalm 139:14

LENT / HOLY WEEK - 2023

COMBINED PARISHES COMMUNAL PENITENTIAL SERVICE

St Thomas: Wednesday **29th March** 7:00pm (with supper following)

INDIVIDUAL RECONCILIATION

St Mary's: Saturday evenings 5:45pm - 6:15pm

Thursday 30th March 7:00pm - 8:00pm

St Thomas: Holy Saturday 8th April 9:30am - 10:00am



PASSION (PALM) SUNDAY - 1st/2nd APRIL *(Please bring own foliage)*

Ceremony will begin outside the Church (weather permitting)

Sacred Heart: Sunday 9:00am

St Mary's: **Saturday** 6:30pm, **Sunday** 8:00am, 10:00am, 5:00pm

St Thomas: **Saturday** 6:00pm, **Sunday** 10:30am

HOLY THURSDAY - 6th APRIL *No morning Mass*

St Mary's: 7:30pm Mass of the Lord's Supper

St Thomas: 7.30pm Mass of the Lord's Supper

Prayer before Altar of Repose after Mass concluding with Night Prayer at 9:30pm

GOOD FRIDAY - 7th APRIL *No morning Mass*

Sacred Heart: 3:00pm Celebration of the Lord's Passion (lay-led service)

St Mary's: 11:30am Stations of the Cross (Combined Parishes)

St Mary's: 3:00pm Celebration of the Lord's Passion

St Thomas: 3:00pm Celebration of the Lord's Passion

HOLY SATURDAY - 8th APRIL

St Mary's: 10:00am Morning Prayer

EASTER VIGIL - 8th APRIL

St Mary's: 6:30pm Service of Light outside the Church (weather permitting)

Sacred Heart: 7:30pm Service of Light outside the Church (weather permitting)

EASTER SUNDAY - 9th APRIL

Sacred Heart: 9:00am

St. Mary's: 8:00am & 10:00am *No Mass 5:00pm*

St. Thomas: 10:30am



THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT 18th & 19th March

Thu lives in Vietnam. When Thu was 12 years old, he stepped on an unexploded land mine and lost his leg.

Living with a disability in rural Vietnam presented many challenges for Thu, who worked mainly as a rice farmer. Thu also took on the role of caring for his wife, Linh, after she suffered a stroke.

Determined to turn their lives around, Thu and Linh joined the Empowerment of People with Disabilities program, run by Caritas Australia's local partner in Vietnam, the Centre for Sustainable Rural Development (SRD).

For Thu, the greatest impact the program has had is enabling the change in Linh's physical and mental wellbeing. With the support of a physiotherapist, Linh can now walk short distances with the aid of a walking stick.


Please donate to Project Compassion 2023.

You can donate through Project Compassion donation boxes/envelopes available from your parish, by visiting caritas.org.au/project-compassion, or by calling 1800 024 413.

REFLECTION

There are many occasions when we ask the question why, and can't find the answer for which we are looking. Why did we miss out on a job? Why did someone we love get cancer? Why can't we find a place to live that we can afford? Why do some days seem so difficult?

It is good to sit with our confusion and even grief. It is good to share it with the Lord who loves us so tenderly. But sometimes we have to step aside from the question why did this happen? It may be better to start with, where can I go from here? What small steps will enable me to face the future in a positive spirit?



Today's readings touch upon these issues. In the Gospel, Jesus encounters a person who was born blind. The bystanders want to know why this happened. They think it must be because either he or his parents did something wrong. They are looking backwards. Jesus prefers to look forward. He says 'he was born blind so that the works of God may be displayed in him.' In other words, his blindness presents opportunities for growth, not a pretext for blame. The letter to the Ephesians similarly reminds us that we are on a journey from darkness to light. The whole of Lent could be described in those words. The letter says 'try to discover what the Lord wants of you.' It asks us in terms of possibilities! The same thing happens when Samuel anoints David. It doesn't matter that David is a young shepherd. He has a big future, as anyone familiar with the Bible well knows.

This week Project Compassion shares with us the story of Thu, who lives in Vietnam. At the age of 12, Thu's life was thrown into chaos when he trod on a land mine from the Vietnam War. Surely, he must have asked why he was among the unlucky ones. He might have asked the same thing again when his wife suffered a stroke. But Thu joined the Empowerment of People with Disabilities program, supported by Caritas Australia through our local partners, the Centre for Sustainable Rural Development. As with so many others, your generosity enabled Thu and his family to build a brighter future. Thank you for helping in this wonderful work of transformation.

Written by Michael McGirr

We pray for those who live in confusion and doubt.

May we try to support positive approaches to even the most difficult problems, such as the partnerships created by Caritas Australia through Project Compassion.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT SACRED HEART & ST PETER'S



BAPTISMS: we pray for Harper, Sophia, Jasmine, Jack and Hannah who will be welcomed into Sacred Heart community in March.

SACRED HEART SCHOOL ENROLMENTS: Open mornings 9.30am Thursdays 23rd & 30th March and School tours by appointment. Ring 9438 1590.

FIAT – A WEEKEND OF PRAYER: Archbishop Peter A Comensoli has invited the Archdiocese of Melbourne to unite for a weekend of prayer Friday 24 March to Sunday 26 March. **Sacred Heart Church** will be open at 8:30am Friday for private prayer and meditation before Mass at 9:15 and afterwards until 10:15am.

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL: Agenda items discussed at 9th March meeting

- * Take the Way of the Gospel next meeting April or May.
- * Memorial plaques for Garden of Reflection wall have been ordered.
- * Successful and well attended World Day of Prayer hosted at Sacred Heart. Funds raised have been forwarded. Thank you sent to Alison Pieper and guest speaker Sr Sarah Puls.
- * Good Friday Celebration of the Lord's Passion will be a lay-led service.
- * Thank you to School for the display in the church. These will change fortnightly.
- * Steven and Martin will meet to discuss agenda for Umbrella PPC. Formation Day proposed.
- * Frank has organized Sacred Heart Family Groups for rosters at the DC Tram Café 3 June & 30 July, and he has encouraged the School to also consider shifts.
- * School Advisory Council meeting dates tabled. School Blessing and Completion Ceremony for refurbishment project 3rd April. PPC members invited to attend.

Next meeting Thursday 13th April. Suggestion box at back of church. Email ppcdiamondcreek@gmail.com

SACRED HEART PRIMARY SCHOOL INVITATION: SHPS would like you to join us at our official School Refurbishment Opening & Blessing Ceremony to be held on Monday 3 April 2023 1.30pm – 3pm.

Honourable guests; past and present staff, students, families and parishioners; valued community members and visitors are invited to celebrate this landmark event in the Sacred Heart story as we showcase a retrospective of the School's 60-year history and officially commemorate today's impressive refurbishment – a monumental platform to present to you, our future. An afternoon tea will be provided. Please RSVP to principal@shdiamondcreek.catholic.edu.au by Thursday 30 March.

50th ANNIVERSARY OF FAMILY GROUPS: Save the Day - Sunday 7th May

Fr Steven will celebrate Mass at 9am on this day and we would like to invite all parishioners to morning tea in the church hall afterwards. If you know any former Family Group members we would love to see them.

VOLUNTEER WORK: Diamond Creek St Vincent Paul are in need of a treasurer. Home visitations are not mandatory and attending monthly meetings would be appreciated if available. Please contact Ray on 0413185722 or by email ray.belli57@gmail.com

CHURCH CLEANING ROSTER: Thank you for the wonderful response. Roster in church. Contact Marg Farrell or Wendy McEvoy if you would like to join the team.

SENIOR MOMENTS: Wednesday 5th April Fish & Chips in the Parish Centre.

Wednesday 5th April Lunch & Scrabble 12pm in Parish Centre.

ROSTERS:

Cleaning: 21st March M. Farrell, L. Armiento

Saturday 18th March St Peter's 7.15pm

Reader: SH School **Commentator:** M. Frisby

Eucharistic Ministers: E. Gittins, Aminda

Sunday 26th March Sacred Heart 9am

Reader: R. McEvoy **Commentator:** F. Ledda

Eucharistic Ministers: C. Garzia, A. Schellens

Our prayers have been asked for sick parishioners and friends that they may be healed & comforted during this time:

Katie Pittle, Catherine Leonard, Peter Mejak, Joan Moran, Bridie Burke, Thomas Keenan, Mervyn Bourke, Jacob Draper, Kath Rickard.

We pray for those who have died and all those whose Anniversaries occur in the month of March that they may enter Joyfully into God's Kingdom:

Madeleine Blake, Laurence Dunn, Patrick Coyle, Owen Doyle

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT ST THOMAS



BAPTISMS: Please pray for Parker, Sullivan, Jude, Ari, Oliver and Fiadh who are being baptised later this month.

BUILDING BONDS OF FRIENDSHIP : Come for a coffee and chat. EVERYONE welcome.

Thursday 23rd March at 1.30 at Phoenix Diamond Creek Road Plenty. Contact me and let me know if coming so I can book a table. stewmarq@bigpond.net.au or 0408370685 Marg



CLEANING OF CHURCH: I was hoping to get a team together to give the Church a clean before

Easter. If you are available after Mass at 9.45am on Tuesday the 4th April could you please contact me the office. 9434 7373.

NEW AIR CONDITIONERS: Our new RAC are now running in the Church, could you please bear with us as we adjust the temperature controls to suit.

Rosters for Weekend 25th & 26th March 2023

Saturday 6.00pm

Reader: A. Fernando

Commentator: K. Salm

Eucharistic Ministers: L. Carty, K. Salm, M. Bedford

Set Up: K. Salm

Sunday 10.30am

Reader: M. Kenny

Commentator: J. Kerr

Eucharistic Ministers: A. Letzia, R. Piccolo, F. Landy

Set Up: J. Kerr

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL: Next Meeting, Wednesday 15th March, 7.00pm. Email: stthomasppc@gmail.com

St Thomas prayers are asked for the following Parishioners:

Our prayers have been asked for sick parishioners and friends that they may be healed & comforted during this time:

Miran Kasalo, John Iacobucci, Andelko Korculanin, Estelle Smooker, Tina Butera, Lilian Hobson

We pray for those who have died including Anthony Barker (Brother of Joe Barker) and all those whose Anniversaries occur in the month of March that they may enter Joyfully into God's Kingdom:

John McGauran, Kath Glennen, Sydney Raymond, Michael Pase, Carl Troiano, Rollo Jackson, Elizabeth Salm, Antonio Gallo, Kathleen Sheehan, Lina Bertuna, Bernadette O'Brien, Bonnie Dickson, Ian Stephens, Annette Hyland, Kellie Stuckey, Jean McMahon, Matthew Van Beek, Mary Tan, Owen Doyle

ARCHDIOCESE AND COMMUNITY NEWS

MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER Weekend "Live Your Best Life in Love" Every relationship is a journey and the grind of everyday life can cause you to lose touch with your spouse. This weekend gives married couples the tools to keep passion alive in a gentle, nurturing environment, away from pressures and distractions of daily living. The weekend is based around Catholic values and couples of all faiths are welcome. Please check our website for more details. 28th– 30th April 2023 in Melbourne (Book early to avoid disappointment) Information/Bookings: Phone **Mercy & James 0409 183 676** or Email: vicbookings@wwme.org.au Website: wwme.org.au

NIGHTFEVER– JOIN WITH THE YOUTH OF MELBOURNE TO PRAY

Archbishop Peter A Comensoli has called for a weekend of prayer throughout the whole Archdiocese on Friday 24th to Sunday 26th February 2023. *Fiat – A Weekend of Prayer* coincides with the Feast of the Annunciation. As we continue to walk the journey of *Take the Way of the Gospel*, Archbishop Comensoli has asked us to begin the year in prayer together as one local Church community meditating on Mary's total 'yes' – as individuals, as parish communities and as a local Church of Melbourne.

We are excited to announce that the *Fiat* weekend of prayer will begin at the heart of our city in Sacred Heart Church, Carlton. Join young people as they gather from across the Archdiocese for a night of prayer, praise, and intercession.

The light of *Fiat* will then travel outwards into our parishes and communities throughout the weekend.

Friday, March 24th, 2023, 6pm – Midnight
Sacred Heart Church, Rathdowne St & Pelham St, Carlton



WHAT'S HAPPENING AT ST MARY'S

Vision Statement "To be a vibrant Christian community engaging with the world"

PARISH OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays 9am-5pm, Thursdays and Fridays 10am-4pm. Please send any bulletin contributions to greensborough@cam.org.au by 2pm Wednesday to ensure inclusion in the weekend combined bulletin. Thank you

HOLY WEEK INFORMATION

PALM SUNDAY 1/2 April All Palm Sunday Masses will commence on the verandah outside the Gathering Space (weather permitting) with the blessing of branches and procession into the church. **Please bring your own branches to these Masses.**

READERS, COMMUNION MINISTERS, PROJECTIONISTS and SACRISTANS are invited to exercise your ministry at the Holy Week ceremonies - Holy Thursday 6 April at 7.30pm, Good Friday 7 April at 3pm, the Easter Vigil 8 April at 6.30pm and Easter Sunday 9 April at 8am and 10am. If you are available, please add your name to the roster in the Gathering Space.

HOLY THURSDAY 6 April at 7.30pm – Washing of the Feet Twelve parishioners are invited to have a foot washed during the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday. If you would like to be involved in this commemorative action of service, please add your name to the roster in the Gathering Space.

At the EASTER VIGIL 8 April at 6.30pm, we need the assistance of a parishioner to light the fire for the Service of Light about 5 minutes before Mass, and then ensure it is safely extinguished after the congregation moves into the church. Fr Steven has a small brazier and will have everything prepared. If you can assist, please add your name to the roster in the Gathering Space.

FIRST EUCHARIST CANDIDATES We welcome Eucharist candidates and their families at our Masses this weekend as they are presented to our Parish Community in preparation for the receiving of the Sacrament of First Eucharist. Our prayers and support are with you all.

VISITING SEMINARIANS. We again welcome 2 fourth year seminarians from Corpus Christi College, **Nicolas Calandra** and **Josh McDermid** who will join us for some of our Sunday morning Masses as part of their formation towards priesthood. Please make them welcome, and you might consider inviting them for lunch on a Sunday after the Masses. They are scheduled to be here on April 2, 9, 30; May 21 and 28."

FOUND A set of keys have been found just outside the Parish Office. Please contact the Parish Office on 9435 1543 if they belong to you or you know of someone who has lost keys.

OUR LENTEN ENVIRONMENT During Lent, our worship space is simplified with no flowers or greenery in the church or Gathering Space representing the barren desert where Jesus fasted for 40 days and 40 nights. This is symbolic of the Lenten Season when we are encouraged to pare our lives back to the basics and look into the depths of our hearts with honesty - only then can we truly see our need for repentance and change.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS DURING LENT Three Stations of the Cross services are available on our parish website during Lent – one based on the *Gospel of St Matthew*, another are *Mary's Stations*, and there is a video *Way of the Cross* with images of the Stations at Our Lady of Good Counsel Church in Deepdene carved by Austrian immigrant Leopoldine Mimovich.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS every Friday during Lent at **7pm at St Mary's**.

ANOINTING MASS at St Mary's. Thursday 30th March 11.00am.



The **2023 Prep Parents Connection Night will be Tuesday 28th March – 7.00pm – 9.15pm.**

This night is an initiative commenced in 2005 hosted by the Parish to provide an opportunity for Prep Parents to connect with each other while being welcomed as members of St Mary's Parish. It is a social evening for the parents to come, meet other parents and members of our Parish while being guided to a reflective time all centred on their

Prep child. Would you be available to be one of the **FACES OF WELCOME** on the **28th of March**? There is much to be done and we need you to help us make this year's experience a meaningful and long lasting memory for everyone. If you can spare 30 minutes at school pick up time to help with setting up (The MLC), or assisting at the end of the evening with packing up chairs, tables, etc., or during the evening greeting parents, showing them to their allocated table, serving drinks and being that welcoming presence to them. Join us at our **meeting with all volunteers on Thursday, 23rd March – 7pm**... (you can join either via zoom or in person) as we put the final touches on the night's program. Please contact me by email sandy.starbuck@cam.org.au or phone the Parish Office – 9435 1543. Thanking you in great anticipation! Sandy Starbuck – Pastoral Associate.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT ST MARY'S CONTINUED

Be informed, inspired and entertained



Book of the week: An Indigenous Voice to Parliament by Father Frank Brennan . Fr Frank Brennan draws on his extensive experience with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to take readers on the journey that has led us to this decisive moment in Australian history. Using his unique experience as priest, lawyer and academic, Frank proposes additional ideas for discussion and presents both the "Yes" and "No" cases, enabling Australians to be better informed before casting their vote. A YouTube talk by Fr Brennan is also available on this topic. If the Library is not open please ask a priest or sacristan to open the room and you can record your loans on the form provided. Access to the catalogue is available at: cloud.collectorz.com/247780



HELP STILL NEEDED - Although the Government has issued 19,000 Asylum Seekers with visas there are still thousands waiting and needing help. The Asylum Seeker Resource Centre is grateful for the support from St Mary's. Our donations have gone down. We know that many parishioners are finding daily living more expensive. However, if able to help food and toiletries are still needed. Among the list are - tinned fish, tomato paste, tinned beans and fruit, honey, spices, dishwashing liquid. St Mary's Social Justice Group

THE PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY: The prayer shawl ministry meets in the Gathering Space 10am - 12pm on Mondays. Enquiries: Maureen Leahy—0407 687 517; Anne Fleming— 0409 234 326 .

EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT: First Friday of month, after 9.15am Mass to 3pm. Spend whatever time you can. All Welcome.

SILENCE IN LITURGY God addresses us through the scriptures. But silence is what helps us discover the meaning and power of these words, letting them 'sink in' and be absorbed into our minds and hearts. In addition to the short periods of silence observed by the Reader after the first and second readings, we will again have a period of silent reflection following the Homily. **The first collection** will be taken up after this period of reflection.

PLEASE PRAY FOR

March Baptisms: Raphael Davis, Jed O'Rourke, Daisy and Sunny Mitchem, Mason Mitoski, Margot Bergantino, Thomas Sinni

Our prayers have been asked for sick parishioners & friends that they may be healed & comforted during this time: Peter Mejak, Michael McAleer, Barbara Fernandez, Christos Pittas, Noah Thorley, Jocelyn Tibayan, Margaret Schreenan , John Mullins, Margaret Bramley, Mark Madio, Sr Estelita Manabo, Dan Quigley, Rosie Bray, Olivia MacDonald, Helen Quigley, Lorraine Alexander

Recently Deceased:

We Pray for those whose Anniversaries occur this week, may they enter joyfully into God's Kingdom: Rex McLennan, Joseph Diacomo, Lionel Hill, Jack Papworth, Roy Farr, Glenn Ferguson, Monica Fitzpatrick Patricia Ryan, Sr Michelle O'Bryan, Joe Batchelor, Jose Segueria, Terry (Mary) Krohn, Kathleen Luttick, Joy Reid, Gilchrist Lundberg, Louie Agpawa, Dan Leahy, George Frantz Teycheney, Rose Papageorgiou, John Palmer, Bruce Kennedy, Hilda Doherty, Lucy Brennan, Delsic Arenha, Sienna Di Mento, Rudi Jahne, Tom & Ada Larkin, Roy Arnold/Jones, Ken Schell, Georgeen Regan, Joseph Carbone, Mrs L D'Souza, Elaine Gleeson, Rebecah Dado, Bonnie Dickson, John Harrington, Ric Millar, May Early, Stan Desmond, Sr. Angela Merici, Kay McRibbin, Fr Walter Silvester, Marcial Moral, Arsen Emirzian, Sharn Davern, Rose Hughes, Greg Maher, Annie Heath, Mary Edwards, Kath Case, Lucy D'Souza, Tristan Cosgriff, Marie Azevedo, Theodore Grote, Henry Wessels, Arthur Maxwell, Gerard L'Huillier, Michael O'Connor, Kathleen, Fitzpatrick, Josephine Phelan, Daniel McCabe, John Fitzgerald, Angelita Moral

ARCHDIOCESE AND COMMUNITY NEWS

MAGI PILGRIMAGES!

Trace the journey of Jesus from the land of his birth to the way he carried his cross and gave the eternal sacrifice in this 14-day Holy Land pilgrimage to Jordan & Israel led by Fr Salas Muttathukattil MSFS. This pilgrimage features places from the Old & New Testament and includes Petra, Mt Nebo, Bethlehem, Nazareth, Sea of Galilee, Mt Sinai and Jerusalem for an all-inclusive offer of \$6,940 AUD.

The fare includes Airfare + Local Transfers in Deluxe Coaches + Stay in Premium Hotels + All Breakfasts & Dinners + English speaking professional guides. Departure from Sydney and Melbourne on 21st May 2023. For inquiries & bookings call 1300 721 561 or email us info@magiholidays.com.au



Lectionary Art and Reflection by Jenny Close Being born blind and then suddenly being able to see must be an incredible experience. But it proved to be a mixed blessing for the man in this story. He was accused of being an impostor by his neighbours, a sinner and an upstart by the authorities who disowned him. Being 'enlightened' by Jesus has its risks. Given the opportunity, would the man return to his unenlightened condition for the sake of a quiet life? Surely not: once he had experienced the touch of heaven there was no going back.

Fourth Sunday of Lent Year: Alternate Readings, Year A

19 March 2023

First Reading 1 Sm 16:1, 6-7, 10-13

In the presence of the Lord God, they anointed David king of Israel.

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 asked Jesse, '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.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 22 R. v.1

(R.) 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 Eph 5:8-14

Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.

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.

Gospel Acclamation Jn 8:12

**Glory to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ!
I am the light of the world, says the Lord;
whoever follows me will have the light of life.
Glory to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ!**

Gospel Jn 9:1-41

The blind man went off and washed himself and came away with his sight restored.

As Jesus went along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. 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.'

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.

'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.



Reflection by Greg Sunter

Today's gospel reading is the second in a series of three quite lengthy readings from the gospel of John that are a feature of the Lenten season in Year A of the liturgical cycle. The three readings address three significant themes and images: water; light; and new life. Although today's passage is about the healing of a blind man, the event takes place as part of a longer section of the gospel dealing with the image of light and specifically the image of Jesus as Light of the World.

The question asked by the disciples at the opening of this event is an interesting one. They ask, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, for him to have been born blind?' In Jewish culture at the time, any physical affliction was deemed to be punishment from God for sinful behaviour. As the man had been born blind, the suspicion falls on his parents as having committed such a terrible offence against God that their son is born blind. Jesus immediately rejects this interpretation of the man's affliction. Physical and mental illnesses or disabilities are in no way punishment from God.

Although the man's physical sight is restored by Jesus simply enough, his journey from darkness into light is a more complicated affair. He faces disbelief, ridicule and even abuse from the Jewish authorities as they try to discredit Jesus and diminish the impact of the miracle. In fact, their treatment of the man is what drives him along the road from recipient of an act of mercy to a confirmed believer. Furthermore, the Jewish authorities, despite their physical capacity for sight, are shown to be the ones who are truly blind and trapped in darkness because they deny the light that is before their very eyes.

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