

Gospel Reflections 22 March 2020

John 9:1-41

It has been a remarkable week. We are in the midst of a crisis that our generation has never known. For Australians, after drought, bushfires and floods, 2020 has certainly got our attention – and how! For our schools there are significant implications as we scramble for policies and procedures in what is pretty much untested waters. We are poised to cancel events, close schools, create online lessons and in all that deal with concerned parents, staff and students. Many of you have spent long hours this past week with your staff preparing for something quite unforeseen. Where do we look for what we need? What advice do we follow? What is the best way to live through this? No doubt fear, anxiety and worry abound.

Interestingly, but maybe not surprising, the 2020 Lenten readings seem to have a focus on healing. Quite a comfort given our circumstances. The healing aspect appears to have a slightly different emphasis each week as we move toward Easter; a healing of heart, mind, body and soul.

- Last week we read about the woman at the well – I might suggest was a healing of the mind and heart.
- This week Jesus heals a man born blind – a physical healing.
- Next week – The reading is Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead – a healing of the whole body.
- All as a lead up to Holy Week and Jesus' death and resurrection – the complete and ultimate healing of heart, mind, body and soul.

What got my attention in this week's reading about the healing of the blind man, were a series of vast contrasts; of light and darkness, sight and blindness (both physical and spiritual), healing and sickness, belief and scepticism, and joy and fear. Jesus' healing of this man is met with suspicion, fear, anger and disbelief by the Pharisees and yet with utter joy, hope by the man himself. This miracle of Jesus surely got the attention of many. Right in front of everyone's eyes, this man, well known as blind since birth, is suddenly able to see and yet rather than a response of wonder and awe, there are those who can only attack the man (and Jesus) with scepticism, doubt and hate when the creator of the universe is staring them in the face.

Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshipped him.

Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind."

Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, "What? Are we blind too?"

Jesus said, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains. (v 38-41)

So, what gets your attention in these troubling times? Should our focus be on fear, doubt, blame and anxiety or rather a time where we encourage each other to look for the light in the darkness and see the healing that Jesus brings to our lives despite the sin and sickness around us. Now, as ever, the world needs to see and hear the saving message of Easter. Where healing, peace, joy and life are found for those who choose to see it.

'Say to those with fearful hearts,

"Be strong, do not fear;

your God will come...

he will come to save you."

***Then will the eyes of the blind be opened
and the ears of the deaf unstopped.***

*Then will the lame leap like a deer,
and the mute tongue shout for joy.*

*Water will gush forth in the wilderness
and streams in the desert.' Isaiah 35:5*

Many blessings and elbow bumps to you all this week,

Mark

Some other verses that jumped out at me this week;

"Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So, we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

"Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you". 1 Peter 5:7

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Phil 4:6-7