



Email: manseltonurc@gmail.com

Weekly Letter - 19 March 2023 - Fourth Sunday in Lent

John 9.1-41

My Lord, God, help me with my inner blindness

This is a lively and rather racy debate between Jesus and the Pharisees, in which the man who was once blind joins in. It becomes a highly strung debate in which people's prejudices, convictions and their condemnation dart all over the place. The whole scene is alive with vibrant characters who are passionate about what they believe.

I'm sure you have been involved in a few lively debates. I hope so, as it is a great way of finding out what you and others believe in. But, once a debate becomes an all out defence of 'your position', then in many ways you sink into a world of inner blindness. Why is this important to a Christian? Following Christ is not about believing a fixed series of propositions, rather, as you know it is a love affair. Or put it this way, following the 'Way, the truth and the life' does not mean you should believe whatever you grew up with, rather following Jesus Christ is having an inner conviction that to know Him you need to be open to God's truth, revealed in scripture, tradition and reason.

An honest person will try to be aware of their blindness, and have a desire to see better, search and know more, and thereby be open to the Spirit of all Truth. The man who was once blind, yes is almost bullied into submission, but he is open – open to the Truth. Why, because he knows truth creates freedom.

Of course we all think we walk along a path which is going in the right direction, but because we also recognise our frailties our inner blindness and our weaknesses we know we need to call upon God for His guidance. This is beautifully expressed in Thomas Merton's prayer, which begins, 'My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going' and ends with 'for you are ever with me, and you never leave me to face my perils alone'. Do google it!

Stephen

Sunday Morning Worship in Christ Well, and on Zoom, will be led by Mrs Judy Harris
Bible Readings : Psalm 23: John 9.1-41

Cycle of Prayer in the Swansea Region – we will pray for Temple, Gowerton

Future Dates

Synod will take place on Zoom on Saturday, 18th March.

Church Meeting – 28th March at 7 pm – in person, in Christ Well

Advance Notice - Monday, 8th May – A Garden Party will be held at St John's to celebrate the Coronation – more details will follow.

Being part of the flock

(1 Samuel 16.1-13: Psalm 23: Ephesians 5.8-14: John 9.1-41)

God who lead us in paths which are right,
but which are not always the ones we expect,
we thank you for the unseen.

Shepherd of the flock, when life takes us in unexpected
directions

we're grateful to be part of a community.

Grateful to have neighbours and friends to worship with,
and to help us wrestle with life's surprises.

You offer us family in many forms, and we give thanks for those we are closest to,
those who travel through life with us,
sharing our experiences and our memories,
supporting and being supported.

Generous host at the table of life,
for the pastures that have nourished us and the waters that have refreshed
us,
for the communities that have sheltered us
and – most of all – for the comfort of your guiding presence with us,
we offer our thanks.

Anne Lewitt

(URC Prayer Handbook 2023)

