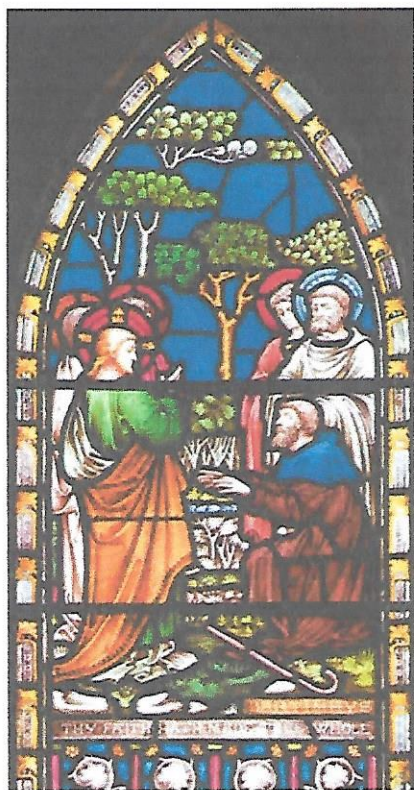


SUNDAY PLUS

Reach out in faith



Lord, that I might see!

by Paul Higginson

In the Gospel today we hear how the blind man Bartimaeus reaches out in faith. In spite of, or because of, his personal darkness, he believes and hopes in Jesus, the Light of the World.

His disability has not caused him to lose faith; he clearly knows who Jesus is, and when he hears him passing by, he shouts loudly, "Jesus, have pity on me!" In this cry we hear our own voice and the echo of many of those who are suffering in the world.


We often grope our way through life, eyes half closed. We can sometimes be blind to the pain of those around us. We often fail to see what is in our own best interests, or what it is that will give us lasting joy and happiness. We

can stumble through life, never really knowing what we are doing, or where we are going. Let us open our eyes and our heart to the possibilities that Jesus holds out to us. Life is not just what we can see.

Jesus heals him. But then the Gospel tells us that Bartimaeus got up and followed Jesus along the road. Jesus doesn't just return his sight – he then gives him a purpose, by letting him see the Christ-light. Bartimaeus knows what his mission is now: to become a disciple of Christ. That same invitation is offered to us too – if we have the eyes to see and the ears to hear.

After many years in the classroom and working as a parish catechist, Paul Higginson is discovering that retirement has given him even more opportunities to support his parish.

Image: Jesus heals blind Bartimaeus, stained glass window in St Mary Abbot's Church, Kensington, London. Renata Sedmakova / Shutterstock.com

Lord of hope, there have been so many occasions when I've been grateful for all the wonderful things that I have seen and heard during my life. Teach me to also thank you for the treasures you have given me through the eyes and ears of my heart.  Amen.

A parable of a harp

King Saul had a very beautiful harp that stood in one corner in the palace. Many musicians had tried to play it and had failed.

One day, the boy David approached Saul and asked if he could attempt to play the harp. Saul laughed derisively. "The finest musicians have made the same request. Do you honestly think that you can succeed where they could not?"

David gently ran his fingers over the harp strings. Suddenly the instrument laughed and cried. It sang of running streams and sighing breezes, bird song and mountaintops. The music was so beautiful that Saul and his courtiers were reduced to tears.

"Is this a miracle? How could you bring forth such exquisite music from this harp?" Saul whispered, his voice still caught up in the depths of his emotional experience.

Feast of the week Thursday 28 October

Ss Simon and Jude

St Jude, an apostle and possibly a nephew of St Joseph, and a cousin of Our Lady, was also known as Jude Thaddeus to distinguish him from Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus.

The story goes that an artist, a messenger of King Agbar of Edessa, asked Jesus if he could draw his portrait, saying that Agbar had leprosy, then an incurable disease. The king thought that

if he could even see a picture of Jesus he would be cured. It was a big ask.

Jesus, impressed by Agbar's faith, pressed a cloth upon his face and instructed Jude to take it to him. When the king unrolled the cloth, he saw an imprint of Jesus' face and was instantly healed of his leprosy.

That is why, over the course of centuries, Jude has been portrayed as carrying a picture of Jesus and associated with hopeless cases and lost causes: what might seem impossible to human beings is not impossible to God.

David looked at him. "Your Majesty, the musicians all tried to play their music upon this instrument. That is why they failed. I merely asked the strings to play their own tunes. That is why I succeeded."

"The mission of the Christian in the world is a mission for all, a mission of service, which excludes no-one; it requires great generosity and in particular the gaze and heart turned heavenward to invoke the Lord's help. There is so much need for Christians who bear witness to the Gospel with joy in everyday life."

Pope Francis

Today:
Jeremiah 31:7-9
Hebrews 5:1-6
Mark 10:46-52

Monday:
Romans 8:12-17
Luke 13:10-17

Tuesday:
Romans 8:18-25
Luke 13:18-21

Wednesday:
Romans 8:26-30
Luke 13:22-30

Thursday:
Ephesians 2:19-22
Luke 6:12-19

Friday:
Romans 9:1-5
Luke 14:1-6

Saturday:
Romans 11:1-2, 11-12, 25-29
Luke 14:1, 7-11

Next Sunday:
Apocalypse 7:2-4, 9-14
1 John 3:1-3
Matthew 5:1-12