

**Reflection on the Gospel-4th Sunday of Lent Year A
(John 9:1-41)**

-Veronica Lawson RSM

“There are none so blind as those who will not see.” Last week, we journeyed with a woman of Samaria from bewilderment to deep insight into Jesus’ identity and mission and to a strong personal faith commitment. This week, we are invited on a faith journey with a man born blind and with the different groups of participants in the drama. All have the opportunity of coming to faith. Not all accept the invitation. Ironically, the blind come to see, both physically and spiritually, while those who are gifted with physical sight remain in spiritual darkness.

In healing the man born blind, Jesus performs the sixth of eight powerful actions or “signs” in John’s gospel that reveal God’s power at work in Jesus and in the lives of those who seek life. The “signs” invite the reader/hearer/viewer to accept Jesus and his revelation of God and God’s purposes.

Time features significantly in the story. Jesus heals the blind beggar on the Sabbath. The Jerusalem authorities have already raised objections about Jesus’ Sabbath healing activity (John 5). Once again they object that he is failing to observe the Sabbath. They label him a sinner. Ironically, in the final authoritative analysis, it is they who “remain in their sins”.

This story reminds us of the need to check out our assumptions. It also reminds us to accept the fact that we can be wrong about things we have always believed. It invites us to be open to see differently or from a new perspective. Jesus’ disciples, the parents of a man born blind, his neighbours, the religious authorities all operate out of unchecked assumptions. They mostly come to the wrong conclusions. Only those willing to admit that they have it wrong have any chance of coming to faith.

In the common estimation, the man was blind, so he or his parents must have sinned. Not so, according to Jesus. From the perspective of the authorities, Jesus heals on the Sabbath and is therefore a sinner. Not so, from Jesus’ point of view. The man was born blind and so needs others to speak for him. Not so, say his parents, he can speak for himself. He does speak for himself and quite eloquently, to the chagrin of the religious authorities. He presents them with the truth about Jesus but they refuse to accept the word of an outcast. Their reaction is violent: they drive him out. But Jesus goes in search of him and leads him to yet deeper levels of faith and understanding.

BULLETIN FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT, YEAR A



ST ALIPIUS PARISH, BALLARAT EAST

Including St Peter & Paul’s, Buninyong

Parish Address: 84 Victoria Street, Ballarat East. 3350

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**MASS TIMETABLE FOR THE WEEK BEGINNING
MONDAY, 27th MARCH 2017**

MONDAY:	No Mass
TUESDAY:	11.00 am in Mercy Centre
WEDNESDAY:	No Mass
THURSDAY:	2.00 pm Anointing Mass
FRIDAY:	9.30 am in Parish Church

NEXT WEEKEND’S MASSES

ST. ALIPIUS	SAT	6.00 PM
	SUN	9.00 AM
BUNINYONG	SUN	10.30 AM

5th SUNDAY OF LENT, YEAR A

READINGS -	First:	Ezekiel 37:12-14
	Second:	Romans 8:8-11
	Gospel:	John 11:1-45

ANNIVERSARIES: Ian Hay, Mick Luke. Molly Forbes, Tom Mackin, Agnes Mackin.

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK: Nathan Cambell, Denise Learmonth, Cath Wheelahan, Barbara Keirl, Mick Kent, Terry McGarry, Kevin Walsh, Peter McDonald (Ocean Grove), Peter Clohesy, Frank Nolan (Buninyong), Mary Barnett, Fiona Dickinson.

COUNTING TEAMS:

This Week: **Team 1:** L. Noonan ©, G. Clarkson, L. Mullane.

Next Week: **Team 2:** B. Perkins ©, F. Nolan, J. Lewis.

COLLECTIONS LAST WEEKEND:

PARISH:	Envelopes:	\$	933.65
	Loose money:	\$	300.00
	Direct debits:	\$	<u>470.00</u>
		\$	1,703.65

PRESBYTERY:		\$	773.00
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LENTEN REFLECTION

Each Thursday in the **Church Meeting Room** from 10.00—11.00 am.
The opportunity is offered to join others and share in reflection on the Sunday Gospels throughout Lent.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

At **Ss Peter & Paul's, Buninyong**, each Wednesday evening during Lent at 7.00 pm.
All welcome.

SOCIAL AFTERNOON

Wednesday, 29th March in the Mercy Centre at 2.00 pm. Please enter via Gent Street.

ANOINTING MASS

The Anointing Mass will be held on Thursday, 30th March in St Alipius Church at 2.00 pm, followed by afternoon tea in the Parish Hall. A plate would be appreciated.
Anyone requiring transport is asked to contact any member of the Caring Group.

COMMUNAL RECONCILIATION

Tuesday, 4th April at 7.00 pm in St Alipius Church, Ballarat East
Wednesday, 5th April at 7.00 pm in Ss Peter & Paul's Church, Buninyong

CHOIR FOR MASS OF THE OILS—2017

Please contact Julie Boyd at the Pastoral Ministry Office to register your interest at:
julie.boyd@ballarat.catholic.org.au

EASTER VIGIL MASS

This year the whole congregation is asked to sing the song of the Easter Exsultet that welcomes the newly lit Easter Candle into its position in our Church for 2017.
On Saturday, 1st April at 10.45 am Geoff Martin has made himself available for practice of the Exsultet so that we will have full congregation voices welcoming the Candle and singing our community praises to God.
Please see if you can give 30-45 minutes of your time on this Saturday morning to add your voice to the singing of the Easter Exsultet and hymns. It is easy to learn. Hope that you are able to come.

MASS OF THE OILS, MONDAY, 10th APRIL

Will be celebrated in St Patrick's Cathedral at 6.30 pm. This Mass is a celebration of the whole Church of the Diocese of Ballarat. We celebrate the unity and ministry of the ordained priests in the midst of the entire priestly people of God of the Diocese.
For further information contact the Pastoral Ministry Office on 5337 7159 or pastoralministry@ballarat.catholic.org.au

THE MESSAGE OF DIVINE MERCY

Thursday, 6th April from 6.30—8.30 pm A powerful presentation by John Canavan and Tommy Canning at Nazareth House Hall. Enquiries to Pete on 0403 192 933.

GRANDMOTHERS AGAINST THE DETENTION OF REFUGEE CHILDREN

Friday, 7th April in the Trench Room, Ballarat Town Hall. Registration 9.45 am for a 10.00 start. Morning tea provided. [RSVP events@brmc.org.au](mailto:RSVP.events@brmc.org.au)

WALK FOR JUSTICE FOR REFUGEES

Palm Sunday, 9th April at the State Library at 2.00 pm. See Notice Board.

STOP THE TRAFFIK

Much of the chocolate that will find its way into our shops and homes this Easter is made with cocoa from Cote d'Ivoire plantations that use trafficked children. A global movement has begun to change this. See www.stopthetraffik.org/au/traffikfree_easter

NATIONAL CHURCH LIFE SURVEYS

From the surveys made available towards the end of last year not enough were completed to enable useful analysis, so we have agreed to have a second go. It is hoped they will be available this weekend, but, if not, they will be here next weekend.
You do not need to put your name on the survey nor do you need to fill out the Mass Centre code. The survey provides helpful planning information for the Bishops and for this diocese. Information will be presented back to this parish in a planning document that will help us to move forward together. Please complete the surveys by 4th April.