

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

-Veronica Lawson RSM

Last week, we journeyed with the 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 varying groups of participants in the drama. All have the opportunity of coming to faith.. 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 our assumptions and, if necessary, to revise our thinking and action. 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 seeing differently or from a new perspective. Jesus' disciples, the parents of the 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 present political climate in my country, admitting that one "got it wrong" seems to be anathema. And yet, from a gospel perspective, it is a sign of real strength.

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. You may like to read the story once more and put yourself in the place of the different characters. There is a little bit of each character in every one of us.

**ST ALIPIUS PARISH — BALLARAT EAST & BUNINYONG**  
FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT — YEAR A, SUNDAY 22ND MARCH 2020

*Our parish is committed to the safety, wellbeing and dignity  
of all children and vulnerable adults.*

**St Alipius' Parish Church**  
82 Victoria Street, BALLARAT EAST 3350

**SS Peter & Paul's Church**  
701 Fisker St, BUNINYONG 3357

### Contact Details

**Parish Office & Presbytery:** 84 Victoria Street, Ballarat East 3350

**Hours:** 9.30am - 1.30pm Tues, Thurs, Fri

**Telephone:** 5332 6611

**Email:** ballarateast@ballarat.catholic.org.au

**Parish Website:** [www.ballarat.catholic.org.au](http://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au)

**SAP Liturgy website:** [www.sapliturgy.net.au](http://www.sapliturgy.net.au)

**SAP Liturgy email:** [sapliturgy@gmail.com](mailto:sapliturgy@gmail.com)

**Parish Priest:** Fr. Jorge De Chavez OSJ

**In Residence:** Fr. Eladio Lizada OSJ

**Parish Coordinator:** Lucy O'Beirne

**Finance Officer:** Kerrie McTigue

**Child Safety Officer:** Roxanne Leed

**Hall Caretaker:** Gavin Maguire

**Funeral Ministry:** Carmel Flynn & Kathy Curran

**Liturgy Coordinator:** David Santamaria

**Parish Finance Committee Members:**

Paul Jans (Chair), Kathy Curran, Arnoud Goossens, Tanya Hislop, Brett Holloway & John White.

### Some Online Mass Options

- ◆ **St. Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne:** <https://www.melbournecatholic.org.au/Mass>  
Mon-Fri 1.00pm Mass streamed live daily  
Sunday Mass 11.00am or available as a recording
- ◆ **Pope Francis' Daily Mass:**  
<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope-francis/mass-casa-santa-marta.pagelist.html>

### Weekly Events

**Rosary:** Thursdays 10.30am Ss Peter & Paul's Chapel

**Reconciliation:** Fridays 11.00am & Saturdays 11.30am St Patrick's Cathedral

### Next Week's Readings: Fifth Sunday of Lent — Year A

**First:** Ezekial 37:12-14

**Second:** Romans 8:8-11

**Gospel:** John 11:1-45

**Baptisms:** Casey Hartup, Peyton Hartup, Billy Oakley, Ollie Geaghan, Archie Geaghan

**Death:** Ray McCluskey

**Anniversaries:** Molly Forbes

**Unwell:** We pray for Kateri Byrnes, Carmel Doherty, Pat Hogan, Cathy Jones, Peter Martin, Letitia Simmons, Margie Wilmott and all who are unwell

### COVID-19 — Guidelines from the Victorian Bishops

In line with Government & Public Health protocols, the Bishops of Victoria have stated:

- Immediate suspension of public liturgies, celebrations of the Mass, until further notice.
- All other gatherings are suspended. For clarification of any concerns, please contact your local diocesan authority.

Bishop Paul has also stated for our diocese that the faithful are still able to gather for prayer in small groups, keeping some physical distance between participants.

### Access to St Alipius' Church

All parishioners and any visitors are welcome to drop into the St Alipius' Church for their own prayer and adoration. **The church will be open every day except Mondays from 9.15am until 4.00pm.** Many thanks to Gavin Maguire and Michael Stewart who are kindly opening and closing the church.

### Baptisms, Funerals & Weddings

The Victorian Bishops have indicated that it may be possible for these liturgies to proceed with a carefully limited congregation. All baptisms will thus be offered privately by Fr Jorge being mindful of recommendations to maintain health and safety for all. Funerals and weddings will likewise be arranged with appropriate considerations.

### Parish Pastoral Council Discernment Gathering

Following discussion with the group facilitator, Rachel McLoughlin IBVM, the proposed gathering for late March will not place. We shall re-evaluate the prospect of a meeting following Easter and confirm details at that time.

### RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS REVIEW (RCIA)

#### St Alipius and Ss Peter & Paul's Communities

The RCIA Program has significantly contributed to the mission and life of the parish over many years and for its continuance it is timely to review this program. We are inviting nominations for two representative from each community to be part of a rewarding and fulfilling ministry within the RCIA Team. Please forward nominations to John Clonan (0478770598) where further information is available outlining the role and time commitment. Currently we have a number of inquirers interested in being a part of this program in 2020/21.

### Counting Teams

Counting teams will not required at this time. Many thanks to Jim Moran who will assist with managing any envelopes or cash contributions (in a sealed envelope or zip-lock bag) made via the presbytery mail-slot. Next week there will be further information regarding how people can continue to make an offering.

<b>Parish:</b>	Envelopes:	\$ 423.00
	Loose:	\$ 300.00
	Direct Debits:	\$ 850.00
<b>Presbytery:</b>		\$ 1573.00



## Fourth Sunday of Lent 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2020



Thirty-two-year-old Sakun lives in a village in central east India. She developed polio as a child and has difficulty walking. After joining a Caritas Australia-funded program, Sakun has learned new skills and gained important mobility. She is more resilient, more confident and more independent.

**Please donate to Project Compassion 2020 and help vulnerable people like Barry, so that they are empowered to assist members of their communities in Australia.**

**Let's Go Further, Together.** You can donate through Parish boxes and envelopes, by visiting [www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion](http://www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion) or phoning 1800 024 413.

### St Vincent De Paul Call Centre — 5334 2844 lines open 24/7

In response to the novel coronavirus situation, SVDP Ballarat have closed their Assistance Centres in Dawson St, Ballarat, and Howitt St, Wendouree. Instead a telephone Call Centre is operating. There will be no face-to-face communication with anybody seeking assistance but arrangements for delivery of any support items to homes will be offered if required.

### Diocesan Clergy Appointments

Bishop Paul has recently announced that Fr Andrew Hayes will take on the role of Parish Priest to Stawell as well as continuing as PP of Ararat Parish. With Fr Mick McKinnon taking up an appointment with the Columban Fathers in Peru soon, Fr Matthew Thomas will become PP of Mildura, Merbein and Red Cliffs. Fr Anthony Nagothu will become the Administrator of Robinvale-Manangatang Parish and Ouyen Parish.

### St Alipius' Parish Finance Committee — Vacancies Open

**Nominations are now sought until Easter** from parishioners for new members to join the the committee. Consideration will be given to ensure representation from both St Alipius' and Ss Peter & Paul's communities, along with equality of age and gender. Nominees will ideally have skills that will complement and support financial management of the parish. Appointed Finance Committee members are required to provide/attain a National Police Check and a Working With Children Check (assistance provided through the parish office).

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**Nomination for St Alipius Parish Finance Committee** (return by email or presbytery mail-slot)

Name of Person being nominated (can nominate self).....

In what ways do you believe they are suitable? .....

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Your name .....