

## 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent - Mother's Day 2020

We celebrate *Laetare* Sunday, the mid Lent 'break out' day, which was traditionally a rest from the harsh penances of Lent. In the Gospel we meet the man blind from birth whose sight was given to him by Jesus. As we unpack the various layers of meaning in that story we also mark Mother's Day, a recent creation - 1908, or Mothering Sunday which has its origins in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and is still celebrated on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent. The two have been conflated over the years. Mothering Sunday was when people returned to their 'mother' church where they had been baptised or to the Cathedral Church of the Diocese. It would be great to recover that element which has deep community and religious roots.

This year Mother's Day will be different in Ireland as we practice 'physical distancing'. Flowers, plants and chocolates will still be bought and delivered but the warm hug can only be given virtually or from a distance in many cases. Let's see this as an opportunity to be creative in the face of the current difficulties. God's all seeing presence and grace is with us no matter how dark the road may seem.

Jesus faced many challenges in his public ministry especially from the established people who saw him as a threat. It was as if they had cataracts which dimmed their vision and narrowed their sight. Jesus however restored the sight of the man blind from birth and opened up a new world for him. There are possibilities for us too who may be blinded by our sense that we control the world.

The scales of indifference to the most needy are lifted as we realise that illness does not discriminate and that we are all on the same footing. The enforced slowing down can give us insight into what we value in life and the gift of living in the now. Martin Laird, a spiritual writer, offers the comparison with driving at night. We would like to see the road lit up for miles, he says, but all we have is light for the yards ahead. Yet we move forward because those several yards that are illumined are sufficient. 'It really is not very much light. But just enough is more than enough'.

Let's not try to leap ahead but cherish each breath, each minute, each day. Trust in God who is working in so many people at this time. We only need to open our eyes and our minds to see that supportive presence and God's amazing grace.

### Mother's Day Prayer

Let us pray,  
Loving God of all creation,  
Be near our mothers on this day,  
Keep our precious nurturers in your tender care  
just as they hold us close to their hearts  
no matter what age we are.  
Grant eternal peace to mothers who have died  
and who continue to watch over us.  
Give all people the grace of your healing,  
bless us with patience  
and open our hearts to reach out to those most in need today.  
We ask this in the Spirit, through Christ, your selfless Son.  
Amen.

