

Sunday Morning Resources

Sunday 12 October 2025 - The Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity

Lectionary Readings (*depending on the kind of service you are leading, you may use one or more of the following readings – however, you **must** use the gospel reading, as this is what the homily is based on*)

2 Kings 5.1–3, 7–15c; Psalm 111; 2 Timothy 2.8–15; Luke 17.11–19

Homily

Today's homily has been written by the Revd Dr David Newton, Diocesan Director of Ordinands

The scriptures often play around with the metaphor of 'sight' and today's readings are no exception. In the Gospel reading today there is the repeated phrase, 'when he saw...'.

It is perhaps not surprising that sight is used so often as a metaphorical troupe throughout the scriptures; it carries with it an incredibly rich set of ideas.

Some of you may have come across a famous video on YouTube involving a few kids playing some basketball. At the start of the video you – the viewer – are invited to count how many hoops are scored. I remember watching intently and counting, 1, 2, 3 and so on. The players stop and then a question appears on screen saying, 'did you see the gorilla?' You are then played *exactly the same video*, and lo and behold weaving its way through the basketball players is another person wearing a gorilla outfit. I remember watching this video and being totally bowled over. How on earth could I have missed the gorilla the first time round? I was so intent on counting hoops I did not see, or perhaps I should say that I did not register, this gorilla prancing across the court!

It is quite an extraordinary video and it makes rather an important point. What we see is not just about the light that enters our eyes, it is about deeper notions of attention and focus. It is also (and here we go beyond the gorilla video) about understanding and interpretation. Two people look at a painting and "see" different things. We might even talk about 'seeing' in the pitch dark as we engage our other senses more acutely, and build up a "picture" of what is around us without any recourse to physical sight at all.

No wonder then the scriptures love to play with this imagery. In our Gospel reading it is used, once again, to great effect.

First, we read, that Jesus saw the ten lepers. Now, we don't really need to be told this. They were shouting at him whilst also keeping their distance. Sight, physical sight, really has nothing to do with it; it is not necessary for Jesus will have heard their cries. The point is not about Jesus physically seeing them. Instead, the phrase says something more about his attitude towards them, his "view" of them, and indeed his response to them. We are reminded of the time that Jesus 'saw the crowds and had compassion on them', or the

earlier story in Luke, where the Good Samaritan ‘saw the [beaten man] and *had pity on him*’. The priest and the Levite, of course, literally saw the beaten man, but in other way utterly failed to see.

To see properly, truly, then is to see with compassion, with attentiveness, with a spirit that is ready to respond. This idea seems to be increasingly important to stress in a world in which people refuse to properly see each other. One group is vilified against another group, one viewpoint is totally disregarded, one perspective seen as illegitimate. The divides of our contemporary society are never going to be overcome until we start *seeing* others – especially those who are different from us or with whom we disagree – with compassion, with attentiveness, and with a spirit that is ready to respond in kindness. To see properly and truly then is to refuse simple dividing lines between people, it is to open ourselves to see differently, to see from other perspectives which might question our initial prejudices and biases.

The good news of Jesus Christ is so often – and particular by St John – understood in terms of light. Christ is the light of the world; the one who lights things up, it illuminates the darkness. We need the spirit of Jesus to light things up so that we might truly see, so that we might see with the same compassion as Jesus had.

The second person in our Gospel reading who we are told ‘saw’ something is the Samaritan Leper. When ‘he saw’ that he was healed, he turned back to praise. Now this must have been a surprising turn of events for those who witnessed it and later read about it. The Samaritans (as you might know from John 4) were those who had rejected worship in the Temple. They had set up their own way of worshipping the Israelite God and it was definitely not according to the customs and laws of the Torah. But who is it that returns to praise God; who is that comes back to worship? Surprisingly, for those first hearer, it is the Samaritan who sees rightly, who understand somethings of worship and gratitude.

Those who first heard or read this text might well have been startled. It is as if Jesus is saying, are you surprised to see the Samaritan? Are you surprised to see one of those foreigners who rejected the true worship of Israel’s God be the one who came to praise? The question is posed to those who encounter the text: how do you view, or see, the Samaritan? Might the Samaritan have something to teach you about true worship? Might the Samaritan have something to teach you about love for neighbour?

The reader’s sight is brought into question, as the reader is forced to see the Samaritan – once again – as the hero of the story.

The story ends with Jesus saying to the Samaritan – go, your faith has made you well. It’s an interesting end because we’re told all 10 lepers were healed. But somehow, it seems that only this one – this one who truly saw and then came back to praise was made well.

It seems to suggest to me that there is something about living life in all its fullness, about being made well in Christ, that has something to do with how we see. It has something to do with how we view others, and especially those who are different to us or think differently from us.

So may the light of Christ open our eyes, that we may learn to see, with compassion, with humility, with an openness to others; may we learn to be surprised, flummoxed even as we see glimpses of God's glory and goodness in the people we least expect. Amen.

Ways to Engage all Generations

When different generations are gathered together in worship there is an opportunity to build relationships and to encounter God in our conversations as we build relationships and learn from each other no matter what our ages, stage of life or faith and for all present to feel included. Adding some wondering questions to the service at an appropriate moment can help to do this.

Wondering Questions: Some wondering questions that may help to engage all generations to ponder and explore during the talk, service or during the week may include (three or so) of the following style of questions:

- I wonder what your favourite part of the story/passage is? I wonder why that is?
- I wonder who your favourite character is? I wonder why that is?
- I wonder how _____ felt or I wonder how _____ felt when _____ happened?
- I wonder how you feel about _____?
- I wonder where you are in this story?
- I wonder what part of the story is about you?
- I wonder what the [tree, pearl, coin] could really be?
- I wonder why _____ said _____?
- I wonder what we can learn about God in this story?

Suggested intercessions

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ,
let us pray to the Father.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
you promised through your Son Jesus Christ
to hear us when we pray in faith.

Strengthen *N* our bishop and all your Church in the service of Christ,
that those who confess your name may be united in your truth,
live together in your love, and reveal your glory in the world.

Bless and guide *Charles our King*; give wisdom to all in authority;
and direct this and every nation in the ways of justice and of peace;
that we may honour one another, and seek the common good.

Give grace to us, our families and friends, and to all our neighbours,

that we may serve Christ in one another, and love as he loves us.
Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit ...;
give them courage and hope in their troubles;
and bring them the joy of your salvation.
Hear us as we remember those who have died in the faith of Christ ...;
according to your promises,
grant us with them a share in your eternal kingdom.
Rejoicing in the fellowship of [N and of] all your saints,
we commend ourselves and the whole creation to your unfailing love.

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Suggested hymns/songs

O for a thousand tongues to sing
Immortal, Invisible
Open my eyes Lord, help me to see your face (Jesse Manibusan)
Purify my heart, let me be as gold
All hail the power of Jesu's name
Take my life and let it be
God is here! As we his people
Here is bread, here is wine
Christ is our light! The bright and morning star

Activities to accompany the service

If you are looking for resources to accompany the service for engaging younger children, then there are lots of online resources. The following free to access/download resources may be useful starting points:

- <https://flamecreativekids.blogspot.com/>
- <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/MessyChurchBRF/>
- <https://www.faithinkids.org/>
- [reflectionary.org](https://www.reflectionary.org/) – lectionary-based resources
- [engageworship](https://www.engageworship.org/) – in particular 'Area 52' for lectionary-based material
- <https://www.bdeducation.org.uk/product-category/primary-age-5-11/>
(weekly@ lectionary resource)