

SUNDAY PLUS

“Let me see again”

by Sr Janet Fearnis FMDM

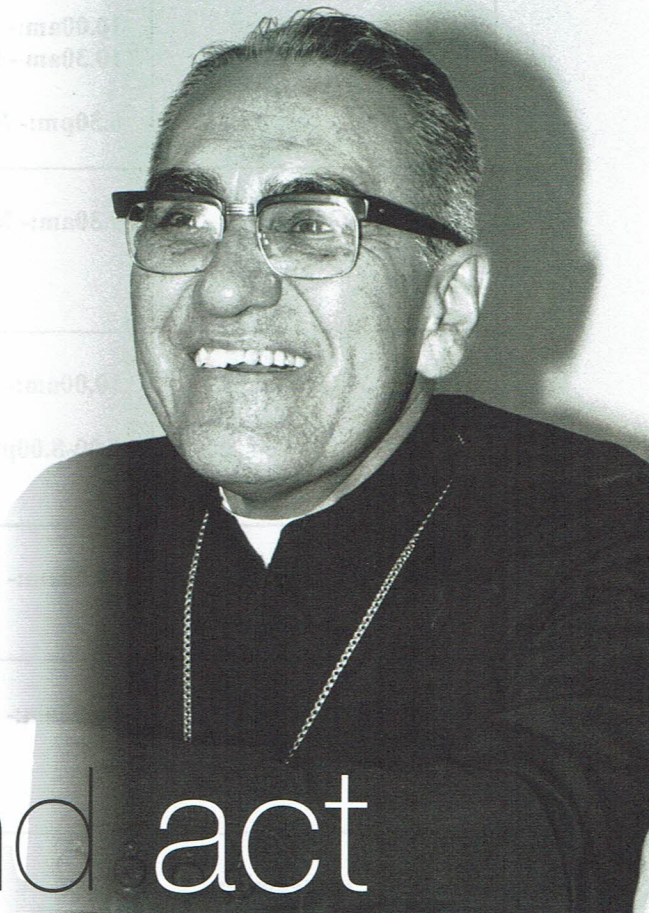
Archbishop Oscar Romero's antagonists frequently ignored Jesus' precedent for his ongoing battle against injustice. Some complained that he challenged the government and local authorities rather than keeping quiet and getting on with managing his Archdiocese. Yet, as Archbishop of San Salvador, Romero had a duty to condemn the death squads acting with impunity in the city and throughout the country of El Salvador. Was he supposed to ignore his tortured and murdered parishioners whose battered and mutilated bodies lay dumped on waste ground outside the city? When his friend Fr Rutilio Grande was amongst them, was Romero supposed to nod benignly and say that it was the Jesuit's own fault because of his too public struggle against injustice?

Romero declared, “We cannot call a society, government, or a situation Christian when our brothers and sisters suffer so much in those inveterate and unjust structures.” He stressed that, “I have no ambition for power, and so with complete freedom, I tell the powerful what is good and what is bad, and I tell any political group what is good and what is bad. That is my duty”.

In today's Gospel we meet someone who had lost his sight and knew what he missed. He yearned to once again recognise people's faces, walk without stumbling on unseen stones, see his food and eat without making a mess. He longed to enjoy colours, both bold and subtly different. Had he ever seen his children and grandchildren? He was tired of begging, of pity, of condescending handouts and of being overlooked.

Jesus heard a man's agonised longing and restored his sight. Romero listened to his suffering people and, like Jesus, died for their freedom.

Sr Janet Fearnis is a Franciscan Missionary of the Divine Motherhood.



See, hear and act

None so blind...

by Gerlinde Symons

When Jesus healed the blind man in our Gospel story today, it was a physical healing, and Bartimaeus was able to see again. But Jesus came to heal us on a far deeper level, to help us have a spiritual awakening, to help us recognise that God is present in each human being, and that we are all brothers and sisters.

I was recently asked whether I find it difficult to work with prisoners when I know they have committed crimes. My answer was simple – firstly, many people in prison have been victims themselves (of abuse, neglect, poverty) and secondly, we have all made mistakes in our lives and done things we regret, so who am I to judge them? What I see when I'm

with them is their innate goodness, their desire to make amends and their great capacity to change for the better, with God's help.

So, just like Bartimaeus, all we have to do is ask Jesus for healing and follow him.

Gerlinde Symons is a lay Catholic chaplain in two UK prisons.

Lord, when I am blundering my way through life, lost and unable to see my way ahead, open my eyes. Let me see you and follow you wherever you might lead me. Amen.

Open your eyes

by Paul Higginson

Jesus' first words to the blind man are: “What do you want me to do for you?” If Jesus posed that question today, how would you reply?

Our first response might be to ask for a lottery win! On reflection, we might say, “I want to be happy” and then wonder how this is to be achieved.

Bartimaeus simply wants to “see again” and Jesus heals him. But then the Gospel tells us that Bartimaeus got up and “followed Jesus on the way”. Jesus returns his sight, but then gives him a purpose by letting him see the light; he gives him hope in a hurting world.

Let us open our eyes to the possibilities that Jesus holds out

to us. Bartimaeus becomes a disciple of Christ, and by doing so turns the original question on its head. Perhaps we need to do the same, and ask Jesus: “What do you want me to do for you?”

Paul Higginson is the assistant principal at a Catholic Sixth Form College in Harrow and has been a parish catechist for more than thirty years.

“ We need not be afraid! Let us open ourselves to the light of the Lord. He awaits us always in order to enable us to see better, to give us more light, to forgive us. Let us not forget this!

Pope Francis

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

Monday:
Ephesians 4:32 – 5:8
Luke 13:10-17

Tuesday:
Ephesians 5:21-33
Luke 13:18-21

Wednesday:
Ephesians 6:1-9
Luke 13:22-30

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

Friday:
Isaiah 25:6-9
Romans 5:5-11
Mark 15:33-39; 16:1-8

Saturday:
Philippians 1:18-26
Luke 14:1, 7-11

Next Sunday:
Deuteronomy 6:2-6
Hebrews 7:23-28
Mark 12:28-34