

Sunday Message

4TH SUNDAY OF LENT (LAETARE)

THE WORD

Year A • 15 March 2026 • Psalter Week 4

SEEING WITH GOD'S EYES

JOHN 9:1-41

Today's Gospel tells the wonderful story of a man born blind who becomes a powerful witness to Jesus.

The blind man trusts Jesus enough to allow him to put mud in his eyes; then he obeys Jesus' instructions to wash in the Pool of Siloam. And the man is healed – he is able to see. In the long conversations that follow, first with his neighbours and then with the Pharisees, the man born blind comes to see more and more clearly who Jesus is, and to lead others to faith. He moves from not knowing Jesus, to recognising him as a prophet, to seeing him as a man of God, then as the Son of Man, and finally to acknowledging him as Lord.

His journey of faith goes from blindness of eyes and heart to being able to see not only with his eyes but also with his heart. ■

PRAY

Pray especially for young people who lack self-esteem and find it hard to see their God-given beauty and potential.

LEARN

The Christian is someone who leads others to Jesus.

Jesus is the light of the world.

We are called to see ourselves and others the way God sees us.

DO

Lent is a time when we are invited to become aware of our blind spots. Examine your life, your relationships, your values, your attitudes. Look for your blind spots. Ask the Lord to heal you, as he healed the man born blind.

SAY

"Lord, I thank you for the gift of faith. Help me to see as you see. Amen."



REFLECT

The first reading describes how David, a young shepherd boy, is anointed king of Israel. God instructs the prophet Samuel to visit the home of Jesse, for God has chosen a king from among his sons. Samuel was certain that Eliab, the first born, was the one God had selected. After all, traditionally the oldest is recognised as leader. Of all eight sons, David would have been considered the one least likely to be selected. He was the youngest, a boy of fresh complexion, the least experienced, but God instructs Samuel not to judge by appearances but as God does, by looking into the heart. Humans look at appearances but God looks beyond appearances, at what really counts.

We can only imagine how shocked Jesse and his family must have been at this extraordinary turn of events – that God had personally selected one of his own sons to be king of Israel and that the one selected was the last one they would have considered.

This story offers an invaluable lesson we should take to heart. We must not judge by appearances, but try to see ourselves and others with God's eyes, try to see the potential and the good in every person.

Life today, especially for younger people, is harder than when I was growing up in the 1970s. There was no internet back then, no social media. We hadn't to worry about online bullying or how we looked on Instagram or TikTok. Young women weren't inundated daily with hundreds of images of stick-thin barbie lookalikes, all conforming to unrealistic beauty standards today's girls are told they must aspire to. Andrew Tate wasn't around to preach his message of toxic masculinity, encouraging boys to treat girls as objects.

The pressure today to be successful, with a rewarding career and a big income and a perfect family and a nice house, is huge. Social media, with its obsession with looks

and money and celebrity, makes self-love even harder.

And this pressure costs. It damages self-esteem. We compare ourselves with others and think we don't measure up, that we're lacking, even that we're failures. It has other negative effects – like self-harm, eating disorders, addiction, depression.

It's hard on young women. In her book about her battle with anorexia called *Good Girls*, Hadley Freeman writes: "We see the impossible standards set for women: be smart but not ambitious; look perfect but don't be vain; don't age but don't get plastic surgery; be slim but don't be obsessed with diets; be smart but not smarter than the men around you; be pleasing and have no needs of your own. This is the nonsense women have to put up with."

She's right. Women shouldn't have to put up with it.

It's hard on young men, too. They're told that to succeed, they must be brash, buff, tough, never soft or sentimental, that women exist for their pleasure. The blogs and websites that make up what's called the manosphere tell them masculinity is all about being active: doing, achieving, overpowering, being dominant, while femininity is all about being passive: being judged, being an object, being small, the smaller the better. This is enormously damaging to many young men.

Of course, we don't all have the same talents, opportunities, or looks, but we're all gifted, each of us unique, precious, irreplaceable, and the only thing that matters is seeing ourselves the way God sees us and loving ourselves the way God loves us. God saw all he had made and found it very good – and that includes every one of us. We must see the beauty, the gifts we have in abundance, and appreciate them, use them well. We need to look beyond appearances, as God does, to what truly counts. ■

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

*Rejoice, Jerusalem, and all who love her.
Be joyful, all who were in mourning;
exult and be satisfied at her consoling breast.*

COLLECT

O God, who through your Word reconcile the human race to yourself in a wonderful way, grant, we pray, that with prompt devotion and eager faith the Christian people may hasten toward the solemn celebrations to come. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING 1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a

A reading from the First Book of Samuel.

In those days: The LORD said to Samuel, 'Fill your horn with oil, and go. I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.'

When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, 'Surely the LORD's anointed is before him.' But the LORD said to Samuel, 'Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.' And Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, 'The LORD has not chosen these.' Then Samuel said to Jesse, 'Are all your sons here?' And he said, 'There remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep.' And Samuel said to Jesse, 'Send and get him, for we will not sit down till he comes here.' And he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. And the LORD said, 'Arise, anoint him, for this is he.' Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David from that day forward.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 23(22):1-3a. 3b-4. 5. 6. R. 1

R: The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

- The LORD is my shepherd;
there is nothing I shall want.
Fresh and green are the pastures
where he gives me repose.
Near restful waters he leads me;
he revives my soul. **R.**
- He guides me along the right path,
for the sake of his name.
Though I should walk in the valley of the shadow of death,
no evil would I fear, for you are with me.
Your crook and your staff will give me comfort. **R.**
- You have prepared a table before me
in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil;
my cup is overflowing. **R.**
- Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life.
In the LORD's own house shall I dwell
for length of days unending. **R.**

SECOND READING Ephesians 5:8-14

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians.

Brothers and sisters: At one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light, for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true, and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, 'Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.'

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

ACCLAMATION BEFORE THE GOSPEL John 8:12

R: Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus.

I am the light of the world, says the Lord;
whoever follows me will have the light of life.

R: Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus.

GOSPEL John 9:1, 6-9, 13-17, 34-38

(a longer version may be read: John 9:1-41)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

At that time: As Jesus passed by, he saw a man blind from birth.

He spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud and said to him, 'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam' (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing. The neighbours and those who had seen him before as a beggar were saying, 'Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?' Some said, 'It is he.' Others said, 'No, but he is like him.' He kept saying, 'I am the man.'

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, 'He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see.' Some of the Pharisees said, 'This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.' But others said, 'How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?' And there was a division among them. So they said again to the blind man, 'What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?' He said, 'He is a prophet.'

They answered him, 'You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?' And they cast him out.

Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' He answered, 'And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?' Jesus said to him, 'You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you.' He said, 'Lord, I believe', and he worshipped him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

We place before you with joy these offerings,
which bring eternal remedy, O Lord,
praying that we may both faithfully revere them
and present them to you, as is fitting,
for the salvation of all the world.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**The Lord anointed my eyes: I went, I washed,
I saw and I believed in God.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

O God, who enlighten everyone who comes into this world,
illuminate our hearts, we pray,
with the splendour of your grace,
that we may always ponder
what is worthy and pleasing to your majesty
and love you in all sincerity.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



St Patrick's Church
King Street
Wellington
TF1 3AP

THE BEACON

Our Lady of the Rosary
& St Luke's Church
Church Road, Trench
TF2 7HG

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M: 07447 632733 E: frravi.bosco@gmail.com

Clergy: Fr Joe Donlan, Fr Michał Łatuszyński M: 07926 044405 E: stafford@pcmew.org

Safeguarding: Moira Shrimpton M: 07540 723614

Parish Office: The Presbytery, King Street, Wellington, TF1 3AP E: ourladyandstpatrick2024@gmail.com T: 01952 – 242423

Sat	14th	17:30	John & Winnie Neilson in Thanksgiving	St Patrick's
Sun	15th	08:45	Mass in Polish	St Patrick's
4th Sunday of LENT		09:00	Peace in the World / Family Mass	Our Lady's
		11:00	Stella Walker (RIP)	St Patrick's
		12:30	Baptism – Gianna Kamsiyochukwu Molokwu	St Patrick's
		15:00	Stations of the Cross	St Patrick's
Mon	16th	Ferial		
Tues	17th	St Patrick		
		19:00	Reunion Mass – St Patrick's Primary & BRJ past pupils	St Patrick's
Wed	18th	Ferial		
		12:00	Raymond Dyche (RIP)/ Fr Prince (30 th Day)	Our Lady's
Thurs	19th	St Joseph		
		19:00	Aurora Sandra Rossell (RIP)	St Patrick's
Fri	20th	Ferial		
		09:30	Rose Douglas (Anniversary)	St Patrick's School
		18:00	Mass in Polish	St Patrick's
Sat	21st	17:30	Deceased Parishioners and Priests of St Patrick's	St Patrick's
Sun	22nd	08:45	Mass in Polish	St Patrick's
5th Sunday of LENT		09:00	Bridie Regan (RIP)	Our Lady's
		11:00	In Thanksgiving for 120 Years of St Patrick's	St Patrick's
Bishop's Visitation		15:00	Stations of the Cross	St Patrick's

SACRAMENT OF FORGIVENESS (CONFESSION)

30 minutes before Masses

ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

30 minutes before weekday Masses

RIP: Mary (Mollie) Davie - Requiem Mass at St Patricks on 27th March at 9:45am. We pray for everyone whose anniversaries are at this time.

BAPTISMS: Gianna 15th March, 12:30 at St Patrick's. Forms are available from the porch. Please hand your form to Fr Ravi.

Weekly Offerings: Total: £1526.07 - Standing Orders £705.87 (£542 Gift Aided), Envelopes £322
Loose Plate £470.20 (Not Gift Aided). Dona - £28. We can only add Gift Aid if donations are identifiable.

Bank details:

SRCDT 234025

St Patrick Wellington

Sort Code: 30-15-52

Account Number: 54546760

SRCDT -234025

Our Lady & St Luke Telford

Sort Code: 30-15-52

Account Number: 54582160



Please scan this QR code to donate to your parish online. You can register your card for gift aid to be added to every donation

ROTAS (W, EM, C)

Sat 5.30: Lynne & Lewis, Ann N, Anne & John **Next week:** Lucy & Damien, Sherrel, Gay & Nicky

Sun 9: Kevin & Joel, Francis, Laura & Edith **Next week:** Katrina & Ria, Phillip, Bobbie, John & Nick

Sun 11: Nancy & Stephen, Moira, Kate & Geraldine **Next week:** Marvellous & Melody, Stephen, Ann & Jane

DATA PROTECTION PRIVACY NOTICE

Our two parishes sometimes collect personal information about parishioners. All personal information is collected, processed and stored in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations. This is retained only as necessary and used by the Parish/Diocese for the benefit of the Parish and for legitimate reasons such as administrative and religious purposes. You can read our full privacy notice at www.dioceseofshrewsbury.org/about-us/privacy-notice.

LIVESTREAM: Our Masses from St Patrick's are available online at <https://churchservices.tv/wellington>

Special Masses on 17th, 21st & 22nd March will also be Live Streamed

120 YEARS OF ST PATRICK'S (1906 – 2026):

Tuesday 17th March at 7pm a special Reunion Mass presided over by Fr Simon O'Connor for all those who have attended St Patrick's Primary School and BRJ. There will be refreshments afterwards in the meeting room.

Saturday 21st March 5:30pm, Mass, presided over by Fr John Rafferty, will be dedicated to our deceased parishioners and priests who have served the parish. There will be refreshments afterwards in the meeting room.

Sunday 22nd March 11am Mass of Thanksgiving presided over by Rt Rev Mark Davies. There will be refreshments afterwards in the meeting room.

BISHOP MARK'S PASTORAL VISITATION: The Pastoral visitation of a bishop is a time of grace for any parish community. Bishop Mark will be visiting the Parish of Our Lady and St Patrick to encourage and support us in our mission. He will visit St Patrick's on Sunday, 22nd March and Our Lady of the Rosary and St Luke on Sunday, 3rd May. Please keep this intention in your prayers.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS: Thank you to the groups at Our Lady's for leading the Stations for the last 3 weeks. The next 3 weeks will be at St Patrick's on Sundays at 3pm, (15th, 22nd & 29th March).

SACRAMENT OF FORGIVENESS: 72 children have celebrated the Sacrament of Forgiveness for the first time, last week. We thank their parents and our parish catechists for their help and support.

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY: Every Thursday after 7pm mass at St Patrick's, in the meeting room, there is a bible study group. From Wednesday 15 April (10.30am), *Wednesday Word* sessions to go deeper into the Sunday readings will be held at Our Lady's. All Welcome

AFTERNOON TEA REMINDER: 20th March, if you put your name down - please come along because we had to turn people away this time: don't take a space!

MARY'S MEALS: Mary's Meals provides life-changing school meals to children living in some of the world's poorest communities. It costs just £19.15 to serve a meal to a child for a whole school year. A volunteer from Mary's Meals will speak to us before all masses this weekend (14-15 March)

SHAPE OUR PARISH FUTURE: 21st April, 7pm at Our Lady's meeting room. We're seeking volunteers to form Parish Management Teams - Faith Formation/Faith Action/Faith Celebration/Admin & Maintenance. If you can't attend but are interested, add your name to the list in the porch at both churches to be kept informed.

SPRING CLEAN at OLOR: Saturday 28th March from 10am. Can you help tidy/clean/beautify the church & grounds for Holy Week? Speak to Pauline or Dianne for more info or add your name to the list in the porch. Tea and biscuits will be available too!

NEW STATIONS OF THE CROSS FOR OLOR: Examples are still up at Our Lady's to view. If you would like to donate there a several ways to do this. Blue Envelopes in the porch at OLOR, cheque made out to 'Our Lady & St Luke Telford' or Bank Transfer direct to the Dev fund: O/lady & St Luke Dev fund, Sort Code: 30-15-52 Account Number:54580260

ECUMENICAL SERVICE: Monday 30th March at 7pm at Wrockwardine Wood Church TF2 7AH. Parking available at Wrockwardine Wood Infant School opposite.

COLLECTION ENVELOPES: Envelopes for the next financial year are available from the porch for current users. They will begin on April 12th. Would you like to start donating via envelope? Add your name to the list in the porch. Remember to complete a gift aid declaration if you are able to. We can claim an extra 25%, at no further cost to you.

BOOKMARKS FOR EASTER EGGS: Handmade bookmarks with Finger Rosary, showing the 4th Rosary: Mysteries of Light. Instituted by Pope John Paul II in depicting the Public Ministry of Jesus between his baptism and Passion. They are available at Our Lady's Church or contact Pauline Hoyle. Funds raised will buy Easter eggs for the children in the Parish.

LENT 2026

RECONCILIATION SERVICE with Fr Chris Walsh:
Wednesday, 25th March 2026, 7pm at Our Lady's

CHRISM MASS: Wednesday, 1 April, 12 noon at Shrewsbury Cathedral (Gail & Alec will represent our Parish)

SACRED TRIDUUM: The following celebrations will be led by Fr John Rafferty at St Patricks & Fr Ravi at Our Lady's:

Maundy Thursday – 2nd April

7pm at St Patrick's, Watching until 10pm

7.30pm at Our Lady's, Watching until 9.30pm

Good Friday – 3rd April

3pm at both churches

Holy Saturday – 4th April

10am for RCIA candidates, Sponsors, Catechists

Easter Vigil – 4th April

7pm at Our Lady's

7.30pm at St Patrick's

Easter Sunday masses as usual

GREAT NORTH RUN: On 13th September 2026, John Stewart will be running the Great North Run in aid of Macmillian Cancer Support. To support: <https://ajbellgreatnorthrun2026.enthouse.com/pf/john-stewart-f4afb>

PARISH EVENTS MEETING: 31st March, 7pm at Our Lady's meeting room, All welcome. If you can't attend but would like to receive the meeting notes by email please contact: paulineheffernan60@gmail.com