Mothering Sunday

Rev’d Peter Balabanski

Lent 4 A – Jn 9 1-41

Children’s wonderings

Jesus spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, saying to him, ‘Go, wash in the pool of Siloam’.

Mother Earth – mud

The first human was made from the dust of the Earth – did Jesus make that man new eyes out of the mud?

Go and wash – and he did.

Sermon

A man blind from birth. We just heard how Jesus gave him his sight. Despite the amazing, good things Jesus did, the religious authorities feared Jesus. They said they’d expel anyone from their faith community who followed Jesus. But we just saw the man born blind refuse to be cowed – like his parents were. After his interrogations and excommunication by the authorities, Jesus sought him out – and this second time, he could see him. And far from regretting his new outcast status, he declared his belief in Jesus, and worshipped him. The man born blind willingly chose the life of an outcast – something he’d known as a blind person all his life. That’s what it would cost him to follow Jesus. And he chose it.

It’s very much less challenging for us to follow Jesus. People say we’re God botherers, flat-earthers and fanatics. It’s taken for granted that we want to ram religion down innocent people’s throats; that followers of Jesus want to interfere with other people’s personal relationships; tell people who

they can and can't love. But Jesus wasn't moralistic or judgmental like that, and for the most part, neither are his followers. We're called to follow his life-example – his way – not a set of rules. The way he gave us was love. And he taught that way mainly by example.

We've seen Jesus meet the man born blind today, and far from judging him or forcing anything down his throat, he's given him his attention, his time, and his love. That's Jesus' example: John gave us a ringside seat – really close – so we could actually feel the tension, then the joy, as his love prised open the shell of blindness and outsider status this man had lived in all his life. We saw all this so we could learn to do the same as Jesus; to give people acceptance, attention, time, love.

Many people carry terrible burdens. We know Jesus wants people freed from the tyranny of those burdens. He's given us his healing gifts to offer, and his example of how it's done – as he did for this man born blind, and for so many others. Jesus offers relief from that pain, that isolation, and a chance to start afresh – to be reborn. It's happened for us. We know all that, and we know lots of people who struggle.

So will we choose to be the means by which they find Jesus' healing love? The man born blind did it for others before he even knew what Jesus looked like.

He met Jesus, and he even invited Jesus' enemies to get to know him. Can we consider that? Introduce people to him – or put another way, will we bring people's questions to the one we know has the time and attention and love to truly address them; the one who takes them seriously when they are crushed by fear and loneliness; the one who will be with them their whole life long?

Let's help people meet this Jesus – the one we've got to know. Let's help these people meet the real Jesus who has time for

people – let’s help these people meet the Jesus who offers acceptance, attention, time and love; Jesus who said he hadn’t come to judge people, but to give us abundant life. Let’s help people meet this Jesus and let his love do it’s healing, freeing work in many more lives. Amen

Mothering Sunday Thanksgiving

Dear God

We thank you for mothers. We thank you for all those who care for us in quiet, often unrecognised ways; we thank you for all those who care for others in patience and love.

We’re sorry for those times when we’ve failed to care for others and we pray that you will teach us to care as you do and that you will hold all mothers and carers in the light of your presence and guide them to you. Amen.

This prayer was produced by the Mother’s Union. Used with kind permission.

Mothering Sunday Simnel Cake and Posy Blessing

Loving God, giver of all joy: We ask that you bless this cake and these posies, that they may be to us symbols of our communion with you and with each other. As they were once scattered over our land as blossoms and blooms, grasses, vines, trees and cane yet are now one, so let us in our diversity be your one redeemed people, and your delight. Amen.