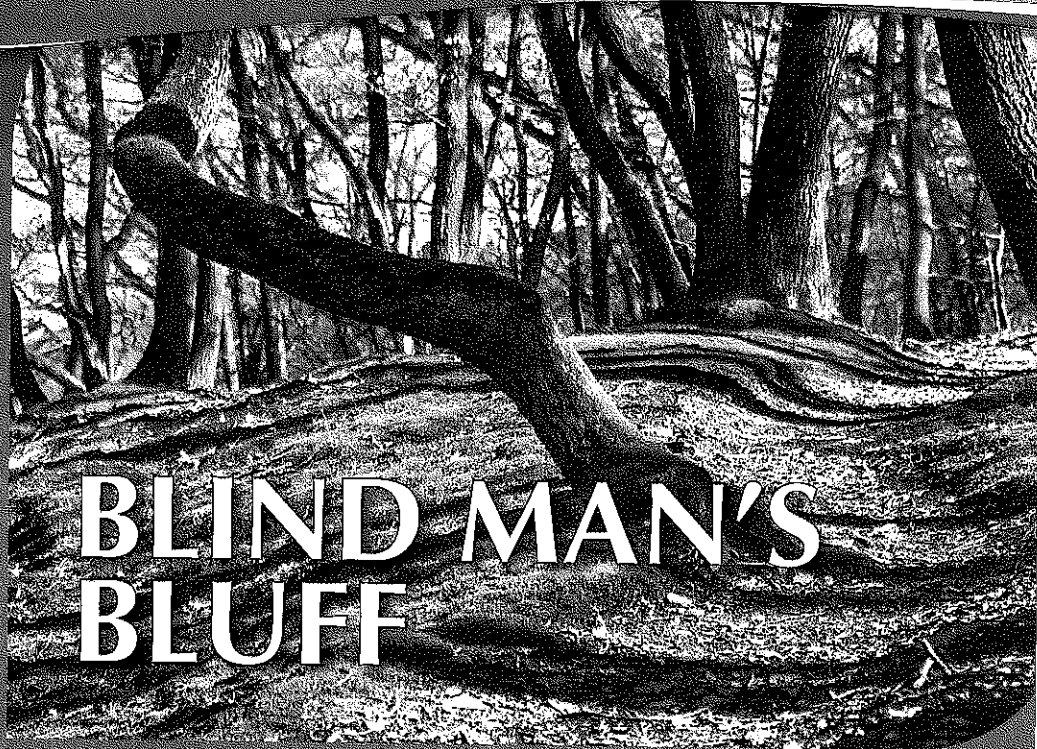


**A**s Jesus went along ...' Travel can be a more self-contained experience these days. The car, bus and train can be a self-contained sanctuary and some go a step further with headphones to provide a cocoon of comforting sound to keep everything else out. I haven't even mentioned the omnipresent smartphone as a distraction from a real personal encounter! But, 'As Jesus went along' he noticed and interacted; thanks be to God for that! He didn't take the safe road, even on the Sabbath. 'The sure road leads to death,' says Jung. Walking along brings up interesting questions. Today it's literally 'whose fault was it that this man was born blind?' In Jesus' time many presumed it was a personal sin of this man, or some inherited sin. Jesus confronted such questions. God was glorified not because of man's sufferings, Jesus tells us, but in spite of them. God doesn't cause chaos and evil. When it happens, it happens not because of God's will. The hearers of Jesus had a cause - effect kind of approach: was it his sin or the parents' sin? Either



## BLIND MAN'S BLUFF

way, the blame was laid at God's feet. But his blindness is not God's doing at all; his sight is. Despite chaos, darkness and disease, God works. God hasn't caused the chaos and disease.

Those who were presumed learned are shown to be ultimately in the dark. In matters of right and wrong, they were the arbitrators in society and yet pride had blinded them to the true nature of God. The warning down the centuries is that we run a terrible risk of clinging to our idea of religion. I fear it tends to be more about structures and buildings in parishes than the person of Jesus Christ. We can drift so far from God that we become godless. We all need to have those areas of blindness dealt with and to ask the Lord to lead us into a deeper life and light.

As Jesus walked along, he was doing the works of God. We must also walk along and appear in person to one another, much the same way. In this Gospel, there is the journey of a person who is literally blind to full sight, and a confirming of the spiritual blindness of those who can physically see. As we put it,

'there are none so blind as they that cannot see.' Today we are invited to choose the way of light rather than darkness; to see rather than condemn; and to bless rather than blame. It is a blessed journey! Take off those headphones!

- Tom Cox

You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty.

- Mahatma Gandhi

### Reflection

Kneel with the blind man before Jesus and ask him to reveal to your heart who he is for you.

### Lesson

Like the blind man, question your skills, your wisdom, your faith, your Jesus, and your God. What seeing is there through this blindness? How can we continue to have more?

### Prayer

Like the blind man in today's Gospel, I pray that I may see, see what the world is really about, see your love around me, see the blindness of those who lead others astray, see that I can live in the light of the Lord all my days.

### This Week (23-29 March)

- 23 M St Turibius de Mogrovejo, bishop
- 24 T St Macartan, bishop
- 25 W THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD
- 26 T St Braulio
- 27 F St John of Egypt
- 28 S St Sixtus III
- 29 S FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT