

HOMILY

4TH SUNDAY OF LENT

LAETARE SUNDAY

21-22 MARCH 2020

A member of the French resistance was caught and ended up in a concentration camp. He experienced many horrific sights and faced death on more than one occasion. He also experienced goodness and a fair amount of luck. There is surprisingly little in his memoir about his captors, but there is a lot about other prisoners. Lying on a dirty bed in the camp hospital and close to death he came to the realisation that his captors were not the real enemy, it was he himself who was the real enemy. "The Real Enemy" is the title of memoir.

This is a worthwhile thought to reflect on at this time. It is easy to blame other people for this world predicament. Why did the Chinese government try and hush things up to begin with? Why is our government not more directive, and empathetic towards the needs of the vulnerable? Why don't super markets act more decisively towards panic buying? What about those people who strip the shelves bare of essentials like hordes of loci? Why have we exploited our planet so comprehensively? Surely there is a connection here?

And yet Jesus said to the men who wanted to stone the adulteress; "Let he who is without sin cast the first stone." May be there are ways in which by our attitudes or actions we have been imperfect in the present situation? This is not to cast aspersions on our motives; it is more a call for increased self-reflection in our own lives. Traditionally before we went to Confession we made an examination of conscience. In a sense, in an ideal world, we should do something like this regularly.

This gospel is about the healing power of Jesus in our lives. I think we take too little notice of Christ the healer. Of course there is the obvious sense in which we want the power of the Holy Spirit to inspire the work of doctors and medical researchers into the virus. Naturally this leads to a concern for the work of everyone in the medical field who greatly need our support.

However there is so the wider healing which we need to come through this crisis in a state of mind which is mentally and spiritually stronger. Here the healing of the blind man is significant. It is perhaps a call to acquire a greater and deeper wisdom and to be truly people of the light. St Paul in the second reading calls us "Children of the light." That is our vocation at this time. It is easy to blame others but sometimes we need to think of the state of our souls.