

# SUNDAY *Plus*

4th Sunday of Lent **Divine Office Week IV** Year A

## The light of faith

My human experience goes beyond merely the regularity of nature as seen in science. The Incarnation means that this creation has been sanctified by God's presence. Only such a faith can also explain the beauty I experience in understanding that regularity and the love I have for nature and its beauties and its laws.

And only the story of the fall and redemption can explain the loves and trials and shortcomings I experience in my human life, even when I am not busy doing the work of a scientist...

The fact that my personal experience of God, in worship and in prayer, is so identical to the experiences of religious people in so many different times and places and cultures, tells me that either there's an underlying truth we are all sharing... or else we are all hallucinating in exactly the same manner...

The fact is, I do personally experience God. I have, always, from earliest childhood...

The science fundamentalist believes, and the religious fundamentalist fears, that religion is a fairy tale suitable only for children, and that once you learn science it will leave no more room for religion. But that just doesn't happen.

Some people are tone-deaf. It's not their fault, and I don't criticise them for it. But I might get bent out of shape if a tone-deaf person insisted that my love of music was an hallucination, based on lies my parents taught me.

Or more absurdly, that my love of music would go away once I'd learned the physics of sound waves.

*Guy Consolmagno SJ, Brother Astronomer: adventures of a Vatican scientist*

Life is made up of encounters, and in these encounters, we emerge for what we are. We find ourselves in front of others, faced with their fragility and weakness, and we can decide what to do: to take care of them or pretend nothing is wrong.


Pope Leo XIV

### To see as Jesus sees

Making the blind man see was a sign Jesus quoted to the friends of John the Baptist when they came asking to know who he was. For him, as for all of us, it is a symbol. We readily call people "blind" who shut their eyes to the truth. But which of us can dare claim that we "see the truth"? The truth is immensely vast and challenging. Would we

be eager to see our conduct to our family, our fulfilment of our responsibilities, our unselfishness, as God sees these things?

The blind beggar knew he was blind, he cried out however hopelessly in human terms, to be given sight. Jesus spoke sadly of those who have eyes yet do not see. This is us. He accepts this, he understands it, he feels compassion for it. But he cannot heal it unless we acknowledge it and ask for light.

Lord of light, my eyes are important but the eyes of my heart are even more valuable. Open the eyes of my heart to see you in everything I say, think and do. Let me see you in everybody I meet.  Amen.



Feast of the week  
Tuesday 17 March

### St Patrick (c. 385-461)

St Patrick was born in Britain – possibly in Wales – during the early fifth century and, at the age of sixteen, was taken prisoner by a band of Irish raiders who attacked his parents' farm. He seems to have been taken to Antrim or Mayo and put to work as a shepherd. Lonely and afraid, he rediscovered Christianity.

After six years Patrick escaped and returned to Britain. Soon afterwards he came to believe that God wanted him to go back to Ireland – but as a missionary, a venture which took fifteen years of study, preparation and ordination to the priesthood.

Knowing something of the Irish language and culture, Patrick incorporated Irish traditions into his teaching of Christianity. So for example he celebrated Easter with bonfires and superimposed the sun onto the cross, creating the Celtic cross. He also used the three-leaved shamrock to explain how the Trinity could be three Persons and yet one God.

### READINGS

**Today:**  
1 Samuel 16:1, 6-7, 10-13  
Ephesians 5:8-14  
John 9:1-41

**Monday:**  
Isaiah 65:17-21  
John 4:43-54

**Tuesday:**  
Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12  
John 5:1-3, 5-16  
England & Scotland:  
St Patrick (Feast):  
1 Peter 4:7-11  
Luke 5:1-11  
Ireland: St Patrick  
(Solemnity):  
Jeremiah 1:4-9  
Acts 13:46-49  
Luke 10:1-12, 17-20

**Wednesday:**  
Isaiah 49:8-15  
John 5:17-30

**Thursday:**  
2 Samuel 7:4-5, 12-14, 16  
Romans 4:13, 16-18, 22  
Matthew 1:16, 18-21, 24

**Friday:**  
Wisdom 2:1, 12-22  
John 7:1-2, 10, 25-30

**Saturday:**  
Jeremiah 11:18-20  
John 7:40-52

**Next Sunday:**  
Ezekiel 37:12-14  
Romans 8:8-11  
John 11:1-45