

4th Sunday in Lent 2026

'Rejoice - God's love is greater than our sin.' - Laetare Sunday

The song 'Bright Eyes' from the film 'Watership Down' by Art Garfunkel came out in 1978. At Easter 1979 I accompanied a children's Pilgrimage to Lourdes (HCPT The Pilgrimage Trust). On the plane from Glasgow, it was customary to have a singsong to pass the time. The voice of an angel echoed through the cabin as a child sang 'Bright Eyes'. It was so beautiful that there was a sacred silence. The 'miracle' was complete when we realised that 9-year-old singer, Joseph, was blind. The boy not only had the voice of an angel but the features of an angel and the heart of a saint. Young Joseph was completely comfortable in his blindness and taught me that inner light and a burning faith are by far more important than physical sight. What joy!

David, the youngest son of Jesse, too had 'the most beautiful eyes and was handsome' according to The Book of Samuel in today's First Reading. Samuel, for a while, could not see the importance of the inner beauty required of God's anointed king as he considered all of David's elder brothers, expecting God's choice to be one of them. However, he eventually, learned that God sees with eyes that search the heart, not relying on outer appearances or even age and experience. It was the youth David who would become God's anointed King. What joy!

In today's Gospel from St John, Jesus states, "I am The Light of The World" and chooses to cure a blind man to prove this claim to be true. The physical cure is less important than the message that Jesus is 'the light' who leads us in the darkest moments of our life and shows us the way to freedom from sin and death. Ironically, the Pharisees and Elders fail to celebrate the man's restored sight but blinded by legalism, focus on Jesus allegedly breaking the sacredness of The Sabbath Day. It is The Pharisees who are blind, condemning Jesus to be a sinner for healing on The Sabbath. This is exactly what legalism can do when left unchecked, applying rules indiscriminately, distorting the true meaning of "Keeping holy The Sabbath Day", and piling even heavier burdens on the shoulders of those already weighed down by life's pain, trials and tribulations.

Consequently, when I am faced with a moral dilemma I simply ask myself, "What would Christ do in this situation? How do I love God and love my neighbour in these circumstances? Am I seeing with Christ's eyes or am I blinded by man-made rules?"

Isn't it amazing how the voice and choice of song of a blind boy, almost 50 years ago, can still teach us so powerfully today as we reflect on Sunday's Liturgy of The Word? Joseph, a boy who saw with God's eyes, still proclaims a poignant message for each of us even after all these years. We should indeed 'Rejoice'. How stunningly beautiful is that?

* 'Bright Eyes' - Watership Down

Art Garfunkel

Is it a kind of dream
Floating out on the tide
Following the river of death downstream?
Oh, is it a dream?

There's a fog along the horizon
A strange glow in the sky
And nobody seems to know where you go
And what does it mean?
Oh, is it a dream?

Bright eyes
Burning like fire
Bright eyes
How can you close and fail?
How can the light that burned so brightly
Suddenly burn so pale?
Bright eyes

Is it a kind of shadow
Reaching into the night
Wandering over the hills unseen
Or is it a dream?

There's a high wind in the trees
A cold sound in the air
And nobody ever knows when you go
And where do you start
Oh, into the dark

Bright eyes
Burning like fire
Bright eyes
How can you close and fail?
How can the light that burned so brightly
Suddenly burn so pale?
Bright eyes