

'THE MAN BORN BLIND' – HOMILY – 26 MARCH 2017

Over the years the Catholic Church has issued major social teaching documents, addressing issues faced by the world community.

Justice issues had included the value and right to work in 1891 and 1931, peace and human rights in 1963.

By 1967 with former colonies gaining independence, researchers, political leaders, universities and others writing on the concept of "development", Pope Paul VI wanted to promote a fuller understanding of development, including economic justice.

[50TH ANNIVERSARY OF 'POPULORUM PROGRESSIO – ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF PEOPLES'](#)
Today's is the 50th anniversary of Pope Paul VI's ground-breaking Encyclical ["Populorum Progressio" - On the Development of Peoples March 26th, 1967.](#)

Paul VI stressed that,

*"Development cannot be limited to mere economic growth.
In order to be authentic, it must be complete, integral" #14*

HIS VISION OF AUTHENTIC AND INTEGRAL DEVELOPMENT INCLUDED -

- the promotion of every person and of the whole person
- in the design of God, every person is called upon to develop and fulfil himself/herself for every life is a vocation
- each person is a member of society, part of the whole of humanity
- we have obligations towards all
- we cannot refuse to interest ourselves in those who will come after us
- the reality of human solidarity imposes a duty
- increased esteem for the dignity of others
- the turning towards the spirit of poverty
- co-operation for the common good
- will and desire for peace
- acknowledgement by humanity of supreme values and of God as their source and their finality
- faith, a gift of God
- unity in the charity of Christ

AMONG THE MANY UNIVERSAL ASPECTS FOR WHICH HE ADVOCATED WERE –

- duty of human solidarity, dialogue, the duty of hospitality,
- equity in trade relations, end to isolationism, contractual justice between nations,
- overcoming hunger, sharing superfluous wealth, overcoming the imbalance of wealth,
- better exercise of power, overcoming stifling materialism,
- the demands of concerted action based on a clear vision of all economic, social, cultural and spiritual aspects.

We see in Pope Paul VI the call for each of us to make a difference in our world.

A difference in solidarity with the human family.

With a vision of every person as a part of God's family,

I invite you to journey with today's Gospel of the man born blind: John 9:1-41.

SOME QUESTIONS THAT MIGHT HELP ARE AS FOLLOWS –

1. WHAT ARE THE ISSUES THAT WE STILL FACE TODAY, 50 YEARS AFTER POPE PAUL VI'S WORDS AND NEARLY 2,000 YEARS AFTER JESUS HEALED THE MAN BORN BLIND?

2. WHAT ARE THE NEW ISSUES?

3. WHAT ARE THE ISSUES TO WHICH WE BRING A BETTER ANALYSIS AND UNDERSTANDING?

4. WHAT IS OUR BLINDNESS IN THE MODERN WORLD?

5. WHERE IS OUR BLINDNESS IN THE WORLD AROUND US?

Or have we not gone past the question of the Pharisees in the Gospel.

"Surely we are not blind, are we?"

6. ARE WE SENSITIVE TO GOD'S HEALING TOUCHES IN OUR WORLD?

The man testified *"He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see"*.

7. WHAT IS THE HEALING MUD AND WASHING IN TODAY'S WORLD THAT JESUS USES?

8. THE MUD AND THE WATER – HOW CONNECTED ARE WE TO GOD'S CREATION?

9. HOW GROUNDED ARE WE?

Symbols of soil and water and human saliva.

Jesus heals, using the gifts God has given us.

Truth is always part of healing. So is genuine love.

As we have been reminded very strongly in the current Royal Commission, honesty and transparency and accountability and social justice are essential to healing.

10. IN WHAT WAYS DO WE LEARN FROM THE MAN BORN BLIND'S ADVOCACY FOR TRUTH AS HE TESTIFIED TO WHAT JESUS DID FOR HIM?

11. WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THE PARENTS?

12. WHEN ARE WE LEGALISTIC, BUT IGNORE THE SPIRIT OF GOD'S LAW?

As some of the Pharisees said

"This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath."

They refused to "see" God's healing on the Sabbath.

13. WHAT BARRIERS DO WE PUT UP TO HINDER GOD'S WORK?

As we read the Gospel passage, we see the man's understanding of Jesus deepen.

From a normal man,

To **RECOGNISING** Jesus as a prophet,

To **WITNESSING** that Jesus is from God,

To **BELIEVING** Jesus is the Son of Man.

To **WORSHIPPING** Jesus.

14. AS WE REMEMBER OUR PERSONAL FAITH JOURNEY, HOW DO WE SEE JESUS AS THE LIGHT? [*"the light of the world"*?]

15. WHAT MIGHT BE OUR STAGES OF GROWTH IN FAITH?

We remember that John's Gospel uses less miracles but gives more detail.
The detail is there for us to bring to prayer.

Let us now experience the journey of the man born blind as we pray the Gospel.
And thank God.

Fr Gerry

[Fr. Gerry Hefferan – The Man Born Blind – 26 March 2017]

[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/032617.cfm>]

[Parish Facebook: <http://bit.ly/parishFacebook26032017>]

Other References:

Pope Paul VI - Encyclical:

['Populorum Progressio' - On the Development of Peoples - March 26th, 1967](#)

Pope Paul VI - Apostolic Exhortation:

['Evangelii Nuntiandi' – Evangelisation in the Modern World – December 8th, 1975](#)