

March 22, 2020

The Rev. Dr. Morar Murray-Hayes



**Reading:** John 9:1-41

**The Message:** Jesus heals, disappears, returns.

Sometimes some Christians give the impression that once you become a Christian, life becomes something next to wonderful.

- Difficult things become easy,
- sadness is turned to joy,
- failure is transformed into success,
- and money will pour down on you like snow in a Mississauga winter!

I'm here to say, it just ain't so. This story reveals a pattern that is repeated in the life of every Christian and in the life of the church. At times, Jesus seems to be very close, but for great hunks of our lives, it seems we are on our own. Like the sighted man, we often feel that we are victims at an inquisition. And the more seriously we practice our faith, the more likely we are to find ourselves losing our 'place' in society, the identity we have through status or wealth or education.

- J.K. Rowling became the richest woman in the world -- that's a status! But she has given away so much money, she has lost her title several times.
- Mark Zuckerberg was offered \$75 million in 2005 for Facebook. By 2006, Yahoo offered him a billion dollars (only a US billion, but even so... ). The CEO said, "I'd never met anyone -- forget his age, perhaps twenty-two then ... -- I'd never met anyone who would walk away from a billion dollars. But he said, 'it's not about the price.'" Zuckerberg's partner said this was the most stressful time in his life. And of this decision, she said, "We try to stick pretty close to what our goals are and what we believe ... just simple things." *The New Yorker*, Sept. 20, 2010

The healed man lost his identity and his job as a blind beggar; his home and perhaps even his relationship with his parents. The blind man might be forgiven for saying, 'I could do without the blessing of this healing.'

Our calling is no guarantee of safety from pandemics, but it is a gift nonetheless. Our faith will continue to make us resilient in this situation. And even as many of us are quarantined from friends and family and from activities that are a part of our calling as Christians and that give our lives meaning, we know that even our isolation is helping others.

Jesus teaches us that suffering and sin are not related. Jesus teaches this with his own life, with his own death.

Sometimes bad things happen. But God's love for us does not falter.

The man born blind who now sees -- he knows there is nothing greater than the gift of sight, nothing greater than the gift of faith. With nothing known of his future, with no supports from the world, he still responds to Jesus, with "Lord, I believe!"

May each of us say the same, "Lord, I believe!"