

Lectionary readings: Deuteronomy 34: 1-12; Psalm 109: 21-31; Revelation 21: 10, 22 – 22; John 5: 1-9

For reflection and prayer

- **Deuteronomy 34:** Despite Moses' close relationship with God, despite the fact that Moses was a great prophet and had led the people out of bondage in Egypt, yet he only saw the Promised Land from a distance; he was not allowed to enter it. I wonder how we feel when God does not do what we would like Him to do for us? The journey towards a mature faith involves a willingness to embrace God for who He is and not for what we would like Him to be or do. Are we stuck in a Sunday-school faith or are we willing to take on the challenge to move from seeing God as a 'comfort blanket' to loving and believing in a God who does not protect us from life's disappointments, difficulties or ills but is with us in them?
- **Psalm 109:** Here are some verses from Psalm 109 paraphrased by Leslie Brandt in 'Psalms Now'. *'O God, the basis of all being, my ultimate and eternal concern, I know that You are not floating out there You are in our world. You are among Your creatures, inscrutable, indefinable, great in majesty and splendour. You bring beauty out of ugliness. Out of the ashes of our sickness and suffering, You bring forth new creations. I never want to define You, O God, for I cannot worship what I comprehend. But I pray for Your grace to stand firm despite my nagging doubts and to praise You in time of adversity.'*
- **Revelation 21-22:** In the New Jerusalem no temple will be necessary, for God's presence will be everywhere and will light up the whole city. Only those whose

names are written in the Lamb's book of life will be there. But I suspect that God's criteria are very different from ours, so let's not try to guess who will be admitted. God looks on the heart. Let's see every person we meet this week as someone made in the image and likeness of God and treat them as God's beloved. There is healing for all; the glory of God is within everyone, albeit hidden, with many unaware of it. This week let's ensure that we live in the presence of the Lord moment by moment, and allow the light of His presence to shine on us and light up our lives, bringing healing to us and to others around us so that we bring about heaven on earth.

- **John 5:** Blind, crippled, paralysed - that surely describes all of us. Blind to our own faults and prejudices, blind to God's presence, blind to other people's deep hurts, blind even to our own needs, blind to the depth of God's love for us and so failing to come to God for healing. Limping through life, crippled by the hurts and wounds we have received on our journey, by rejection, criticism, unforgiveness, crippled because we have chosen to hold on to our hurts, unaware that God wants to heal us. Emotionally and psychologically paralysed by grief, guilt, bitterness and resentment, fear and anxiety and low self-esteem. Jesus is addressing to us the question: 'Do you want to get well?' The man was full of excuses and so are we. 'Don't we have a right to be resentful, angry, and to blame others for how we are?' we say. Do we really want to be healed? Let's see Jesus reaching out His hand to us and saying, 'Let Me help you to become who you truly are - My beloved, alive with My life, empowered by My Spirit.' Are we going to respond to Jesus' invitation, take hold of Jesus' hand and choose healing and wholeness as we open our life to Him?