

Service at Home

Lent 4 22/3/2020

The following prayer invites the Holy Spirit to be a part of our devotions

PRAYER OF INVOCATION:

God of life and light,
everything that exists comes from you.
Everything that is, is filled with your energy and presence.
You are here, in this moment,
your joy and love infuse all things.
You animate each of us with your love.
You give us all that we have and are.
In this place and in this time
we gather to experience you God.

A Prayer of Confession, where we reflect on our sinful nature and beg God to forgive us as God has promised to do.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION:

God of all goodness,
your world is a place of wonders
and we live in the midst of your generous goodness. Forgive us for
walking as if we had our eyes closed. Forgive us for not seeing beauty
all around us – amongst us and within us.
Forgive us for preferring the dull, dim shadow world of our own limited
understanding.
We truly do want to come out of the shadows
and be fully alive in your world of light today and every day. This is our
heart-felt prayer.
Amen.

Reflect on the following as we become aware of God's forgiveness

WORDS OF ASSURANCE:

Friends, hear this,

the light has come into the darkness

and the darkness has not, nor will it ever, overcome it. We are renewed to be people of light.

The readings for you to read before your reflection

Ephesians 5:8-14

⁸For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light—⁹for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. ¹⁰Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. ¹²For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly; ¹³but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, ¹⁴for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

“Sleeper, awake!

Rise from the dead,

and Christ will shine on you.”

This is a word from our God,

Thanks be to God!

You are invited to use the following practice to process the scripture.

1. What are you hearing in this scripture?

- Don't try to figure it out, rather try to find a word or phrase that resonates for you
- Are there words or phrases that stand out?

2. Reflect of the Scripture

- Read a second time reflecting on the way your life is touched by this reading.
- What is it in my life that needs to hear this reading now?

3. Respond to message given to you.

- What difference will this make to my life?
- Has this scripture touched my life?
- Have I been motivated to react or act differently?
- Do I need to reflect further on this scripture?

GOSPEL READING

John 9:1-41

¹As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. ²His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” ³Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. ⁴We[□] must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. ⁵As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” ⁶When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, ⁷saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. ⁸The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” ⁹Some were saying, “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.” He kept saying, “I am the man.” ¹⁰But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” ¹¹He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ Then I went and washed and received my sight.” ¹²They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”

The Pharisees Investigate the Healing

¹³They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. ¹⁴Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, “He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.” ¹⁶Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath.” But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?” And they were divided. ¹⁷So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.” He said, “He is a prophet.”

¹⁸The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight ¹⁹and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” ²⁰His parents answered, “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; ²¹but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.” ²²His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. ²³Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

²⁴So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, “Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.”
²⁵He answered, “I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.”
²⁶They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?”
²⁷He answered them, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?”
²⁸Then they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses.
²⁹We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.”
³⁰The man answered, “Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes.
³¹We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will.
³²Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind.
³³If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.”
³⁴They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?” And they drove him out.

Spiritual Blindness

³⁵Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”
³⁶He answered, “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.”
³⁷Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.”
³⁸He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him.
³⁹Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.”
⁴⁰Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?”
⁴¹Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.

**This is the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ,
Praise to You Lord Christ!**

You are invited to use the following practice to process the scripture.

1. What are you hearing in this scripture?

- Don't try to figure it out, rather try to find a word or phrase that resonates for you
- Are there words or phrases that stand out?

2. Reflect of the Scripture

- Read a second time reflecting on the way your life is touched by this reading.
- What is it in my life that needs to hear this reading now?

3. Respond to message given to you.

- What difference will this make to my life?
- Has this scripture touched my life?
- Have I been motivated to react or act differently?
- Do I need to reflect further on this scripture?

REFLECTION

The writer of the book of Micah tells us we must, “do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God.” Why do you think the writer of Ephesians tells readers to, “Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord”? It might be that what is pleasing to the Lord is hidden from us. It might also be that we clutter our lives with so much that we are told should be pleasing to us that we can’t easily see what is truly pleasing. What do we need to ignore or clear away in order to be able to find what is pleasing to the Lord? How will seeking what is pleasing to God change us and our faith communities?

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

God who illuminates the world,

today we remember the promise told in the book of Isaiah, “the people that walked in darkness have seen a great light. On those who lived in the land of the shadow of death,

on them has the light shone bright.”

We thank you for these words of revelation and

today we pray for all who feel themselves living in darkness. We pray for all who can see no way ahead

because of the darkness all around them. Today we pray for light to dawn.

We pray for your light of love and truth

to break into the lives of all the people of the earth. May the light of life bring life to all.

Amen.

**Please pray for those known to you who are sick and have asked for prayer.
You might like to pray for health workers and all those working in the lives of
those who are sick.**

Lord hear our prayer.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be your name,
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done,
On earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
As we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
And deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours
Now and forever. Amen.**

Benediction

May the goodness and mercy of God enfold you,
the glory and light of Jesus Christ shine upon you,
the insight and power of the Holy Spirit inform you
this day and every day.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord!