

A LITURGY FOR HOME - LENT IV

When life's circumstances prevent us from attending Church.

THE OPENING ACCLAMATION & CONFESSION

Leader + Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.

People **God's mercy endures forever.**

Leader Let us confess our sins to God.

Silence

People Have mercy upon us,
most merciful Father;
in your compassion forgive us our sins,
known and unknown,
things done and left undone;
and so uphold us by your Spirit
that we may live and serve you in newness of life,
to the honor and glory of your Name;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Leader Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life.

People **Amen.**

THE OPENING COLLECT

Leader Let us pray
O God, the author and source of all light, you gaze into the depths of our inmost hearts. Never permit the powers of darkness to hold your people captive, but open our eyes by the grace of your Spirit, that we may be able to look on your Son and see the One you sent to illumine the world, so that, seeing, we may believe and worship Jesus as the Lord who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever.

People **Amen.**

A WORD OF SCRIPTURE

Reader A reading from the Gospel of John

As Jesus walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes,

saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The 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?" Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" He 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." They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know." They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then 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." Some 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. So 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." The 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 and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" His parents answered, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but 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." His 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. Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." So 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." He answered, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" He 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?" Then they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?" And they drove him out. Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered, "And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him." Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he." He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him. Jesus 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." Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains."

Reader The Word of the Lord.
People **Thanks be to God.**

REFLECTION

- Salvation is about healing, and just as the cosmos itself can be ruptured and torn apart by injustice, so too it can be healed by all human efforts to bring justice, which is balance, back to human relationships to earth, air, fire, water, and one another. *Matthew Fox in Original Blessing.*
- Jesus tells the blind man "you have seen the Son of Man, you have seen the Christ; the one speaking with you is he." What if each of us could put on some glasses—"God glasses"—that allow us to see that intricate and detailed beauty of each person? Imagine how differently we would act if we remembered Jesus' words: "you have seen Christ, he is speaking with you now." *Diana Macalintal.*
- "Neither he nor his parents sinned. Period. But that the power of God may be seen in him, I must do the works of him who sent me." *Translation by George M. Lamsa in Gospel Light (N. Y.: Harper & Row, 1964).*
- Christ must be the light that shines through you, and the people looking at you must see only Jesus. You have a challenge from Jesus to meet: He has shed the light, and you will take His light and lighten every heart you meet. *Mother Teresa.*

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

- ✓ With whom in this story does your heart empathize? The parents who were afraid of being excluded from the community? The blind man? Those who thought the law was the most important thing to follow instead of the human need for which Jesus seemed to break the law?
- ✓ What do you think? Does it make a difference that Jesus sees the man before he sees his blindness?
- ✓ Are there people you do not 'see' whom you are called to 'see' more deeply? What difference would such 'seeing' make? What in you, normally, keeps you from 'seeing' them?
- ✓ What are the ways in which you want to be 'seen' beyond the labels or titles or most obvious characteristics which are normally first 'seen?' What difference would that make to you? And how might that be the beginning of healing for you?

RESPONSE

Leader With all our heart and mind, we pray to You, O Christ.

Reader We for the mission of the Church, that in faithful witness it may preach the Gospel to the ends of the earth, we pray: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Reader For the peace of the world, that a spirit of respect and forbearance may grow among nations and peoples, For the poor, the persecuted, the sick, and all who

suffer; for refugees, prisoners, and all who are in danger; that they may be relieved and protected, we pray: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Reader For all who have commended themselves to our prayers; for our families, friends, and neighbors; that being freed from anxiety, they may live in joy, peace, and health, we pray: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Reader For all who have died in the communion of your Church, and those whose faith is known to you alone, that, with all the saints, they may have rest in that place where there is no pain or grief, but life eternal, we pray: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Reader For the prayers and intentions we hold in our heart - *Silence may be kept* - we pray: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Leader Gathering our prayers and praise together, we pray:

People **Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Leader O Lord, support us all the day long, until the shadows lengthen, and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then in thy mercy, grant us a safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at the last.

People **Amen.**

Leader The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore.

People **Amen.**

God of healing and hope, in Jesus you meet us in our places of pain and fear. Look with mercy on those who have contracted the new virus, on any who are vulnerable, and on all who feel in danger. Through this time of global concern, by your Holy Spirit bring out the best not the worst in us. Make us more aware of our interdependence on each other, and of the strength that comes from being one body in you. Through Christ our wounded healer. Amen.

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