

Prayerful preparation for Fourth Sunday of Lent : Year A

Set aside a prayer time and begin by relaxing and coming to stillness. Read the Gospel, preferably aloud and slowly, paying attention to any words that stand out for you. Stay with them: is God is present to you?

John 9:1 6-9, 13-17, 34-38. The blind man went off and washed himself, and came away with his sight restored.

Jesus saw a man who had been blind from birth. He spat on the ground, made a paste with the spittle, put this over the man's eyes, and said to him, 'Go and wash in the Pool of Siloam'. So the blind man went off and washed himself, and came away with his sight restored.

His neighbours and people who earlier had seen him begging said, 'Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?' Some said, 'Yes, it is the same one.' Others said, 'No, he only looks like him.' The man himself said, 'I am the man.'

They brought the man who had been blind to the Pharisees. It had been a Sabbath day when Jesus made the paste and opened the man's eyes, so when the Pharisees asked him how he had come to see, he said, 'He put a paste on my eyes, and I washed, and I can see.' Then some of the Pharisees said, 'This man cannot be from God: he does not keep the Sabbath.' Others said, 'How could a sinner produce signs like this?' And there was disagreement among them. So they spoke to the blind man again, 'What have you to say about him yourself, now that he has opened your eyes?' 'He is a prophet' replied the man.

'Are you trying to teach us,' they replied 'and you a sinner through and through, since you were born!' And they drove him away.

Jesus heard they had driven him away, and when he found him he said to him, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' 'Sir,' the man replied 'tell me who he is so that I may believe in him.' Jesus said, 'You are looking at him; he is speaking to you.' The man said, 'Lord, I believe', and worshipped him.

A Guide for Lectio Divina

Jesus Christ is revealed to us through His holy Word, whenever we read the Scriptures or hear them proclaimed at Mass. Through Him we come to know the Father.

Have your scripture passage ready in front of you and become comfortable with it. Read it over a few times to get past any questions that arise about meaning. Invite God to speak to you through the text. Ask for openness. Let yourself settle into an expectant stillness.

This kind of prayer has three 'phases' that you move between as you feel drawn: Lectio (reading), Meditatio (meditation) and Oratio (prayer).

Lectio: Read slowly and gently, listening with your heart to the words. There is no need to rush. No need to get to the end of the passage. When a particular word or phrase strikes you and seems to have some savour, linger with it...

Meditatio: Let it into you. Pause with it. Let the word or phrase resonate. Repeat it to yourself, relish it, let it echo and soak into you until the 'flavour' begins to go, then...

Oratio: Let yourself respond in prayer, in words from the heart, or a space full of silence, or spontaneous, unspoken feeling. Whenever the moment feels ripe, begin to read again, ...

Ending when you are ready, mark the end of your time of prayer with some closing gesture or words of prayer. Afterwards you might want to make a note of anything that seemed significant.

Copied from website *Pray As You Go*, <https://pray-as-you-go.org/pdf/1253>

Reflection

Consider Darkness and Light themes throughout all our scripture readings next Sunday.

The story of the healing of the man born blind invites us to consider the importance of sight, both spiritual and physical.

When we are blind, what or who is it we are not seeing, not remembering, forgetting?

Have we become blind to ... what?

What are our moments of light? Are we grateful for these and praise God for these gifts?

The blind man is given physical sight but he is also given spiritual insight about the person of Jesus.

Who is Jesus for you? What do you think God wants to do for you this Lent? Can you let God give to you? What is it you want?

Through Baptism, we are called to walk as children of the light, to live in full knowledge of who Jesus is for us. We are offered grace to do this.

Many times in our lives we can have our eyes opened by God, opened to God's love for us, to our love for others, to the beauty of creation. Yet we are on our way to eternal glory and only then will our eyes be fully open, the darkness ended and we shall see God fully as God is.

Adapted from *The Sunday Connection*, www.loyolapress.com.