



Title : Journey to the Cross

John 9:1, 6-9, 13-17, 34-38

As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been born blind. Jesus spat on the ground and made some mud with the spittle; he rubbed the mud on the man's eyes and told him, "Go and wash your face in the Pool of Siloam." (This name means "Sent.") So the man went, washed his face, and came back seeing.

His neighbours, then, and the people who had seen him begging before this, asked, "Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?"

Some said, "He is the one," but others said, "No he isn't; he just looks like him." So the man himself said, "I am the man."

Then they took to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. The day that Jesus made the mud and cured him of his blindness was a Sabbath. The Pharisees, then, asked the man again how he had received his sight. He told them, "He put some mud on my eyes; I washed my face, and now I can see."

Some of the Pharisees said, "The man who did this cannot be from God, for he does not obey the Sabbath law."

Others, however, said, "How could a man who is a sinner perform such miracles as these?" And there was a division among them.

So the Pharisees asked the man once more, "You say he cured you of your blindness—well, what do you say about him?"

"He is a prophet," the man answered.

They answered, "You were born and brought up in sin—and you are trying to teach us?" And they expelled him from the synagogue.

Spiritual Blindness

When Jesus heard what had happened, he found the man and asked him, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

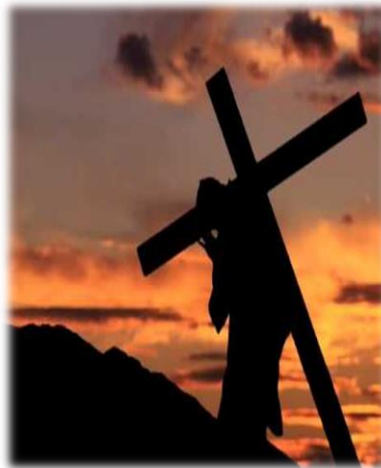
The man answered, "Tell me who he is, sir, so that I can believe in him!"

Jesus said to him, "You have already seen him, and he is the one who is talking with you now."

"I believe, Lord!" the man said, and knelt down before Jesus

Prayers

Lord, I do believe in your love for me. When I remember what you did for me, stir my heart to always respond to the needs of those around me. You may not ask me to lay down my life for them but you do ask me to reach out to those in need. Help me to love those I find hardest to get along with. **Amen**



Lord Jesus, today we remember your journey to the cross. When we are asked to make sacrifices for those we love, help us to be as brave and loving as you were. Amen

Mission Week Prayer.

Dear Lord,

We are the seed of Notre Dame and we can grow together as a family if we love our neighbours the way God taught us to.

Our college Mission Week helps us to have faith to accept that with this gift nothing will be impossible so we can truly live out St Julie's message to "do small things with great love".

St Julie and Francoise pray for us, protect us and bless us.

Amen

Reflect: Our final week in College before the celebration of Easter is always one in which we think about the painful journey that Jesus took with his cross on his way to be crucified.

Jesus was beaten, tortured, forced to walk under the unbearable weight of a cross, he was humiliated, laughed at, spat upon, stripped... and then nailed through the flesh to a cross where he was left to die. It was gruesome. It was agony. It was something that he endured for us all. And so before we celebrate the joy that comes with Easter and his resurrection it is right that we stop to think about the suffering that had to happen first!

□ What is the biggest sacrifice someone has made for you? How did you thank them?

Focus on one each day

Pray For:

- those preparing to receive the sacraments at Easter.
- those we know who are feeling sad or unwell at this time.
- those who are tortured, hurt or humiliated for their beliefs.
- the strength to stick to our Lenten challenges.
- a safe and happy holiday and blessed Holy Week and Easter for all.

Prayer in action this week:

- Make a sacrifice for someone you love.
- Distance yourself from people who hurt others.
- Give help and support where it's needed.
- Forgive.

Lord, as we remember the journey that you took for us, help us on our own journeys:
Sometimes we stumble and even fall, sometimes we need the help of family and friends, sometimes we cry out in pain...
Be with us on our journeys, be there to help us to our feet, to comfort and reassure us and to soothe our pain.

Jesus, our Good Shepherd, walk with us through this season of Lent.
As we make our journey with you to the cross, remind us to think of others;
inspire us to be generous; encourage us to be truthful; and strengthen us on our journey. **Amen**

Jesus is stripped of his garments

"When the soldiers had finished crucifying Jesus they took his clothing and divided it into four shares, one for each soldier. His undergarment was seamless, woven in one piece from neck to hem; so they said to one another, 'instead of tearing it, let's throw dice to decide who is to have it.'" John 19:23-24

Lord, in your final moments you were stripped of all dignity when the soldiers removed your clothes. Help us to respect the dignity of all in our world and give us the courage to stand up for those who are vulnerable in our society. **Amen**

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Jesus Dies on the Cross

Those terrible last hours of pain and anguish for Jesus, the pain felt by his friends and by his own mother... Why? Why did Jesus allow this to happen? He did it for YOU and for each of us. He did it because he loves us. He did it to show that there is another way, the way of love and of peace...the way of God. As Holy Week approaches, the last few days of Lent, let us be mindful of this alternative way - the way of Christ; the way of truth, peace and love. Let us try to walk this way and turn away from the paths of pain, anger and darkness that we have all walked.

Lord, as we reflect upon the Stations of the Cross we know the painful journey you were forced upon.
Thank you for putting yourself through the pain and humiliation for us, as we make it through the last few days of Lent may we be aware that the difficulties we may face are nothing in comparison with yours for us.
Thank you for never giving up on us, help us never to give up on You. **Amen**

Jesus, forgive us for the times we have nailed others to the cross because they were different.
Forgive us for the times we hurt others by insulting them, gossiping, spreading rumours, or acting like they didn't even exist.
Help us to love all people as you do. **Amen**

Jesus carries his cross

We think of times when we, or others we know, have felt crushed by the weight of our troubles and we remember that, just as Jesus bore the weight of all our crosses as he journeyed to Golgotha, he continues to do so now. We recall the popular reflection "Footprints" and how, at the lowest and most difficult times there is only one set of footprints in the sand but we are comforted by the Lord's explanation:

"My precious child, I would never leave you during your times of trial and suffering. When you only see one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you."

Let us pray:

Lord, we bring to you all those who carry a cross: the homeless, refugees, addicts, the mentally ill, and all others, especially those we know, who are struggling under the weight of their difficulties...

(Pause for a moment to think of those we know, feel free to offer their names)

Lighten their burden with the knowledge that they are not alone, that others care and pray for their recovery.

Amen

Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus

Seeing Jesus' increasing weakness Simon is pressed into helping to carry the cross.

A man in the crowd – who did not even know Jesus. How many men and women – whose names we may never know – are today sharing the burdens of suffering? Becoming brothers and sisters – sharing fear – striving to fight for peace and justice. How can we, this Lent, help to shoulder the burdens of others...?

Lord, sometimes I can get too carried away with my own life and all too easily believe that I don't have the ability, or time, or courage, to help others.

Simon of Cyrene didn't really want to help Jesus, he was picked from the crowd;
help me to step out from the crowd, to put myself forward, to help others because I know it is the right thing to do and not because someone asked or told me to. **Amen**

