

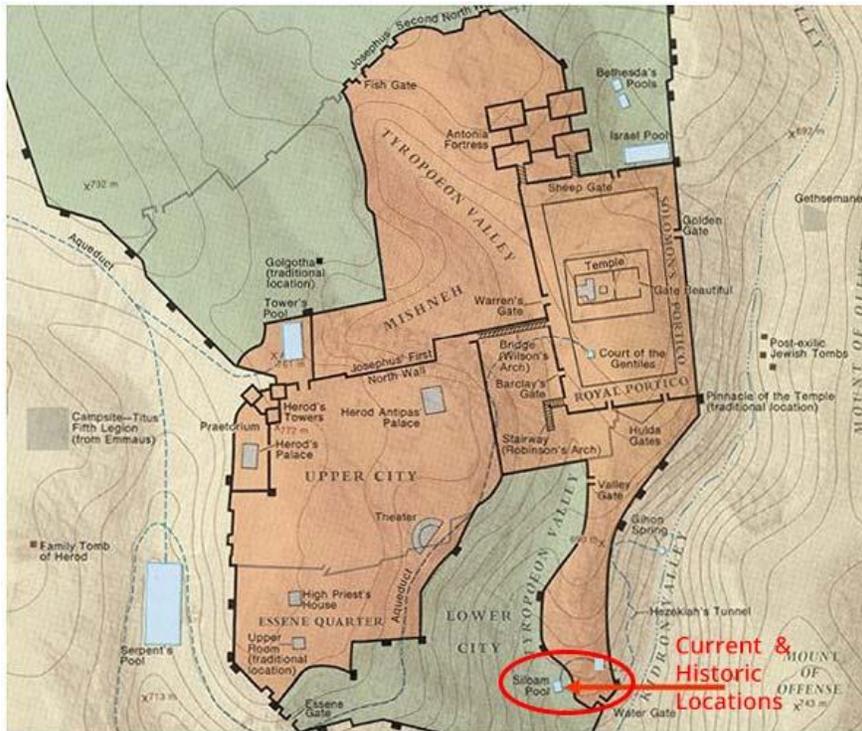
John: 9:1-41

The Lord be with you and with your spirit. A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John. Glory to you, Lord Jesus.

"As Jesus went along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. Jesus spat on the ground, made a paste with the spittle, put this over the eyes of the blind man and said to him, 'Go and wash in the Pool of Siloam,' a name that means ascent. 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 eye. So when the Pharisees asked him how he had come to see, the man 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's a prophet,' said the man. 'Are you trying to teach us,' they replied. 'And you, a sinner, through and through since your birth?' 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 replied, 'You are looking at him. He's speaking to you.' The man said, 'Lord, I believe,' and worshipped him."

The Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.



Fr Dispin John Homily Sunday 22nd March 2020 St John's Mitcham

Hello parishioners, the St. John's Mitcham's faithfuls. Where are you? It is Sunday. Are you enjoying a holiday from the Lord away from the Lord? Well, if you are, then here is a spoiler. I'm going to give you a weekly dosage of God's stuff. I'm sorry, I'm so used to doing this and I'm so used to looking into your eyes when I break open the Word of God. It kind of feels a bit strange to look into a camera and speak my homily. Maybe I would like to treat the eye of this camera as your eyes, as though I'm looking into your eyes and speaking and breaking open the Word of God.

Whose fault is it? That was the topic today. Whose fault is it? When the blind man presents himself, or actually at least is seen begging, the disciples began to argue. "Whose fault is it? Is it his sin or his parents sin," and all of that. Jesus tells, well, we do not know whose fault is it, but maybe there is a purpose here. God has a purpose and he says that the glory of God will be revealed through this man. What does that mean? Jesus takes the weakness of this man and uses this as a prism through which God's glory can shine. They were busy about arguing. Jesus was busy making a paste to heal this man.

Jesus touches him and heals him. Jesus brings him out of his darkness to see the light, a light that will liberate him, a light that will give him new life. He can see now. He doesn't have to sit and beg. That must have meant a lot to this man. Sitting and begging was below his dignity. Now he doesn't have to do that. He can go and work. He can find a job. He can see the beauty of the world and God's creation. Perhaps for the first time he can see his family, maybe his child, who knows? He can see what it means to be part of God's beautiful creation. Darkness cannot enslave us. The hand of God will touch us, free us and liberate us. We are not meant to be suffering forever in darkness. And how beautiful is this message for us in these difficult and troubling times that God does not want us to live in this darkness for the rest of our lives?

Thanks to the government for taking the actions necessary. Thanks to all the health care workers out there who putting their lives in danger are saving lives. Thanks. But for us, this may be a different time and a difficult time too. This may be a time for us to understand that God works in and through our weakness to shine his light of grace. God is nearer to us than ever before and that is what we must believe and hang onto, that God is nearer to us. In my 12 years of priesthood, I have never seen anything like this, that is being away from my people. On occasions I may have celebrated a private mass, which sometimes felt a bit strange, but for the first time in my life today when I celebrated that private mass this morning at 9:45, I felt your presence, that all of you were sitting there with me and we celebrated this mass together.

You were with me. Every one of you, and your spirit. In some strange way I could feel the power of your presence. And to me, that was the most beautiful sacramental moment, that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ, that you were there with me. This is what we need to understand again and again, that this social distancing and in a way social disconnection cannot be the tool that will destroy us. In fact, this is the very thing that will bind us together even stronger. We understand that in this difficult time, God is present and active. That is the meaning of the sacrament. God is present and active.

We hang on to this God. We know that this God will never let us down. Remember in the face of this darkness, God will shine his light. In the face of this disaster, there is a meaning to be found in each one of us as an individual believer and as a community of believers. We will hang on together, together with the Lord. When I did mass this morning I even preached a small homily, a small one, but strange. The sad part was that was no collection after mass, so enjoy. Enjoy this time together as a family. We are here for you. We will be united in our prayers. If there is something that you have to do like tidying up

your garage or cleaning that fridge or getting into that pantry, small little things, but there is also tidying up spiritually, opening the eyes of spiritual blindness, the inner healing that we must all go through.

Maybe this is an opportunity. Spend time in prayer, individual prayers and together as a family, pray. And remember in all of this, God's presence is all pervading. God is near. As Saint Paul says, "Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ." May this time of trouble bring you the peace of Christ. May you know and remember that the presence of Christ is always in your life.

God bless you. Stay safe. We will see again soon. Take care.