

## **INTERACTIVE SUNDAY MEDITATION GUIDE**

March 22, 2020, 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent

Scripture Text: John 9:1-41; I Samuel 16:1-13

Sunday Lectionary Topic: The Healing Work of Jesus: From Darkness Into Light

### **To EMC Member Families and Individuals:**

One of the blessings this Luzon Community Quarantine gives is time with family and oneself alone with God. God's word in Isaiah 43:1,2 is now to be experienced, *'But now, this is what the LORD says-- he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.'*

God is taking us to Himself in the midst of this COVID 19 pestilence and wants us to also take Him and His word seriously and delightfully. We then encourage you especially during Sundays to gather as a family or as a small group to worship following the suggested liturgical guide as a community of warm bodies. No need for live streaming to provide space for each one to engage directly with one another and feel the warmth of God's presence moving through each one of you.

We are providing as well an Interactive Sunday Meditation Guide to lead you to come up with a customized sermon according to your context. In Homiletics, this is called "Community Sermon". We suggest that this be read by one of you before the Sunday gathering at home in preparation for him/her to serve as facilitator. The "Community Sermon" facilitated by a family member be limited also to 20-25 minutes as in any other Sunday sermon. Reserve intensive discussion and reflections after the worship time which would be equivalent to Sunday school. Be ready with your individual Bibles.

For those who are alone, you can still follow the guide and do your own "exegetical" study of the Scripture text, journaling striking insights from your reading.

Families/Homes are also encouraged to journal your "Community Sermon" even through bullet points and perhaps share it through social media. This becomes then the "EMC-livestreaming style." Keep a daily journal of this Community Quarantine experience until we come together and celebrate God's protection and sovereignty over us all!

## **The Sunday Lectionary Text, March 22, 2020; 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent**

### **John 9:1-41.**

Jesus healing of a man born blind is said to be the 6<sup>th</sup> of Jesus 7 miracles recorded in the gospel according to John. Accounts of Jesus healing the blind were also mentioned in the gospels according to Mark and Matthew wherein He only uses spit in Mark 8:22-26 and simple touch in Matthew 9:27-31. Interestingly in John, He used mud, spittle and instruction to the blind man to wash his face in the pool of Siloam.

What triggered the healing of the man born blind by Jesus was a question from His disciples resulting to a miracle but stirring up pockets of discussion and explanation from neighbors, the man's parents and religious leaders. This, is where the "Community Sermon" could also evolve as today's hearers and readers of the Word. Just ensure that discussion and reflection would be anchored on the lectionary topic of "The Healing Work of Jesus: From Darkness Into Light."

### **1 Samuel 16:1-13**

Perhaps we'll wonder about the connection of this Old Testament biblical reference concerning the anointing of David as king of Israel next to Saul by the prophet Samuel, to the New Testament text on Jesus' healing of the man born blind. This is where the guiding work of the Holy Spirit would come in during the family/group discernment. It would surely be an exciting exchange of insights with the facilitator always bringing each one to the lectionary topic which is mainly about God's healing work in Jesus Christ.

**Focus Statement:** *(for facilitator's use)* The healing work of Jesus is wholistic, restoring the sick humankind (we who have strayed away from God's marvelous, healing light) from the darkness of sin towards His illuminating and inspiring Word, making us hear and obey God.

### **Reflection Questions**

1. The story says that Jesus was walking along when he saw a man who had been born blind. Why do you think the gospel writer John described specifically the blindness from birth of this man? Connect this to the question of the disciples. What lesson did Jesus teach His disciples about sin? About blindness? How are we similar to the disciples in their perspective on blindness or any handicap?

2. How did Jesus heal the blind man? Compare this to Mark 8:22-26 and Matthew 9:27-31. Any insight on the elements he used for the healing of the blind man?
3. Describe the reactions of the people on the healing of the blind man and what you think of their remarks.
  - 3.1 The neighbors
  - 3.2 The Pharisees
  - 3.3 The blind man's parents
4. Choose at least one statement among the responses of the healed blind man to peoples' reactions and share what you make of it. (vv. 9b, 11, 12b, 15b, 17b, 25, 27, 30)
5. How does Jesus' wholistic work of healing (body, mind and spirit) seen in the healed blind man? You may draw the answer from the conversation between Jesus and the healed blind man after he was expelled from the synagogue.

### **Deepening Discussion after the Worship Gathering**

How do you connect the Old Testament passage of David's anointing as king of Israel by the prophet Samuel to Jesus' healing of the man born blind? Try relating this to the relationship dynamics in Jesse's family. Look also into the perspective of Samuel in the choice of leaders. How does spiritual blindness implied in Jesus' words manifested in this Old Testament account?

### **The challenge for Christian living in our present critical times**

Jesus' healing work goes beyond physical restoration. He addresses primarily the human spiritual condition which is estrangement from God wrought by sin and He brings to light the glory of God's power and might over a seemingly dismal situation. "His blindness has nothing to do with his sins or his parents' sins. He is blind so that God's power might be seen at work in him." (John 9:3). Jesus broadens our understanding of who God is in the course of His healing work, thereby, making us see, hear and believe in His word.

The man born blind was stuck to this narrow understanding of illness and infirmities, so with Jesus' disciples, worsened by the Pharisees' self-righteousness, nosiness of neighbors and indifference of close kin. What a dark world he must have lived in all his life but being born blind, he must have no concept of what is dark and light. Hence, the "healing" he experienced baffled him although he obeyed the

command he heard from Jesus of washing his face in the Pool of Siloam. This experience of healing was made complete and meaningful in the blind man through a personal "seeing" of Jesus and decision of believing in Him.

Amid the COVID 19 pandemic, we, too are being led to experience healing in the Lord Jesus Christ, leading us from the darkness of narrow mindedness, controlling tendencies, obsessive compulsion, narcissism and indifference. God's work of healing is now going on, we better lie down and sit still. We listen closely to what we are not only hearing but what we are also seeing happening around us. We are God's beloved and all these things He allows to happen for us to be brought out of darkness into His marvelous light.