

“We have all known the long loneliness, and we have found that the answer is community.”

– Dorothy Day

WEEK 4: INDIA
4TH SUNDAY OF LENT 22 MARCH 2020

REFLECTION/HOMILY NOTES

Today's gospel story of Jesus healing the man born blind has a strong and powerful message for our times. Disability was considered to be result of sinfulness in the time of Jesus. Even today suffering can be considered a result of sinfulness by some. Jesus, however, rejects these notions by healing the man and even more radically healing him on the sabbath.

The healing of the man born blind is twofold; the physical cure leads to a spiritual revelation which allows him to see Jesus as the Son of Man. The miracle also causes a stir amongst the community; as here is a man who went unnoticed now challenging the leaders, revealing their own blindness. Jesus' love and compassion bring light - to the man born blind but also to those around him.

In our Project Compassion story this week, we meet Sakun from India, a young woman living with a disability.

As is the case in many countries, people like Sakun and her family are often 'out of sight' when it comes to receiving the support and care needed to participate in the life of the community.

Through her participation in the Caritas Australia supported program Sakun's dignity is upheld as an equal member of the community, her voice is heard and respected. She has a means to earn an income and is now more independent with her new improved mobility.

How can we use our freedom and courage, much like Jesus with the man born blind to act with justice and love to those who are excluded?



Thirty-two-year-old Sakun lives in a village in central east India. She developed polio as a child and has difficulty walking. Until now Sakun, an indigenous Gond woman, has been isolated in her community, unable to earn a livelihood and without knowledge of government schemes that could help her.

Sakun lives with her sister in a rural area of Chhattisgarh, India's poorest state. Home to 26 million people, with 10 million living in poverty.

Life is hard in this region, and even harder for the state's indigenous people. Sakun belongs to the Gond tribal community which is amongst India's officially designated Scheduled Castes and Tribes. Historically disadvantaged, they suffer higher poverty rates than other parts of India.

In 2018, Sakun joined a Caritas Australia-funded program which is implemented by Caritas India and its local partner, Samarthan. Through their strategic guidance and support, Sakun learned new skills and gained important mobility.

Sakun now earns her own income and makes a small profit which goes towards her family's basic needs. She is more resilient, more confident and more independent.

With your help, Caritas Australia can help uplift vulnerable communities and support the right of indigenous peoples around the world. A brighter future women, men and their families can start today. Let's Go Further, Together.

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

We pray for our sisters and brothers around the world who are living with disability: that together we can work to ensure the God given dignity of all is upheld, removing obstacles and overcoming the structures that exist preventing equality in our communities.

FUNDRAISING IDEA

Host a Caritas Kitchen and help mothers like Sakun become agents for change in their own community. All you have to do is choose a date and location and register your event through the Caritas website.

www.caritas.org.au/caritaskitchen

Your guests can RSVP, donate and discuss the event on your personal fundraising page.

You'll receive a host pack shortly after registering.

BULLETIN NOTICE

As an unmarried woman with a disability, Sakun was isolated and unable to earn a living until Caritas Australia helped her set up a thriving kiosk. Now involved in village decision-making, Sakun's income is growing, along with her confidence.