

Some men came, carrying a paralyzed man on a bed. They were trying to bring him in and lay him before Jesus; but finding no way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles into the middle of the crowd in front of Jesus. When he saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven you."

So that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins — "I say to you, stand up and take your bed and go to your home." Immediately he stood up before them, took what he had been lying on, and went to his home, glorifying God. Amazement seized all of them, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, "We have seen strange things today."¹⁰

1. Desire **I desire to help carry a friend.**

I hold two cups, one full of water, one empty. Each cup is a friend. I pour water, life, from one cup into the other. When I pour it back again, the cups become a symbol of friendship. Each gives to the other. I repeat this as desired.

Alternatively, I find a photo of someone who was a friend to me in desperate times, and I spend a few minutes recalling that time to immerse myself in the feeling of true friendship... Whether symbol or friend, I consider how friendship can sustain life in the darkest places, on frightening journeys. Jesus poured out his life for his friends.

I ask the Spirit of Friendship to help me be a carry a friend. It may be at distance, by phone, giving what ever is needed. If needs are critical I need to act quickly.

2. Rest **Today I rest in the Trinity of Friends.**

I read the prayer text. I imagine I am encircled by the Trinity of Friends, Father, Jesus and Spirit. Each addresses me by name, saying, 'Rejoice, our friend who was lost is now found'.

When life threatening illness strips ordinary life away, friendship is life saving. But how can I befriend those who need to be carried a while? To discover the best way forward, I rest now, and reflectively throughout the whole day, in the Welcoming Trinity...

3. Befriend **I breathe in the Spirit of Friendship.**

I imagine and feel the Spirit of Friendship unfurling in me, releasing the love and practical help that reaches out in friendship. I breathe it in deep, wait, then breathe it out those who need a friend to carry them, one way or another, to urgent healing.

I repeat as desired – breathing, befriending, helping quickly ...

I conclude in thanks, considering two things. First, if possible, can I get in touch with the one who befriended me so well, to reconnect. Second, to decide who I might pass this exercise on to, and how. Who urgently needs to a friend now?

PRAYER TIME: Fifteen minutes. Five minutes each for the three steps.

The three dots ... indicate the places to pause.

If you are specially moved at any of the steps, remain there for the rest of the prayer.

¹⁰ Lk 5:18-20,24-26