

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Dear Parishioners,

In the Gospel today we read about the healing power of Jesus. The greatest healing that Jesus brings us is of course healing from our sins through reconciliation with God. This is healing that we all need and the only way to salvation. But Jesus also healed people of their physical, emotional and spiritual suffering because they too are ways that we can be "oppressed by the devil." Forgiving sinners and healing the sick was how Jesus liberated people from the forces of evil. By healing both soul and body Jesus demonstrated His goodness and power as God. And just as Jesus gave the Church the authority to reconcile sinners in His name, He also entrusted the Church with His ministry of healing the sick.

One well-known Catholic authority of praying for the sick is Francis MacNutt. He has dedicated his life to encouraging Catholics to pray for and with others for healing from all kinds of suffering. Below are excerpts from his book, *The Practice of Healing Prayer: A How to Guide for Catholics*.

With my prayers,
Father Conley

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"Why We Pray for the Sick" by Francis MacNutt

from his book *The Practice of Healing Prayer: A How to Guide for Catholics*.

Prayer for healing depends upon the gift of faith. We need to believe that God has the power to heal through our prayers. But just as having the gift of faith is important, it is also important for us to have a reasonable foundation upon which to base our healing practice. I believe we can base our healing prayer on Scripture, tradition, and our own human experience...

Scripture

Over and over in the Gospels, we read that Jesus encouraged his followers to pray with expectant faith for the sick. When we read the New Testament, we become aware of how great a part healing prayer plays in the gospel story. St. Luke, in particular, tells us all kinds of healing stories. Right at the beginning of Luke, we read how the archangel Gabriel appeared to Mary and told her that she must name her son Jesus (Luke 1:31) because his very name means "God Heals" or "God saves." Jesus was his only name and was meant to signify his mission in life. ("Christ"---meaning the "anointed one"---is his title and not his last name.) And so, whenever we say the name of Jesus, we are reaffirming our belief that his primary mission is to heal us....

Then Luke tells us many individual stories describing how Jesus healed the sick. As a result of people witnessing his healing powers, Jesus is overwhelmed by the crowds of suffering people who are chasing after him. Moved by compassion, he tells his followers to

pray to the "Lord of the harvest to send out laborers to his harvest" (Matthew 9:37). Jesus needs help!

A little later, however, Jesus answers his own prayer for help by choosing the twelve apostles, with whom he shares his very own mission by bestowing on them his divine power and authority to cure disease (Luke 9:1). These simple, uneducated followers then set out and, two by two, go from "village to village proclaiming the good news and healing everywhere" (9:6).

Notice how significant this commissioning was: Jesus did not emphasize how different he was from us but instead shared the very same extraordinary divine power he possessed with ordinary people. His followers were not priests or scholars or elders; they were the blue-collar workers of his day, as it were.

We may be tempted to think: "St. Peter and the other apostles were the founders of the Church, and they are out of my league." The twelve apostles were unique, but that's no excuse for us to avoid healing the sick ourselves. In fact, in the very next chapter, Jesus chooses another seventy-two followers, whose names we don't even know, and tells them also to cure the sick: "Whenever you go into a town where they make you welcome, eat what is set before you. Cure those in it who are sick, and say, 'The kingdom of God is very near to you.'" (Luke 10:8-9)

Everything in the gospels encourages us—even orders us—to pray for the sick. ...We have no record of Jesus ever refusing to heal someone....Jesus is never recorded as having told a sick person (as we might be tempted to do) that God was testing that person in order to teach him patience. Instead, we always read that Jesus healed the one who asked. Sickness is not seen as a blessing in disguise but as a curse. The gospels encourage us to pray for sickness to go away...

For some reason, Catholics have gotten the impression that praying for healing is a Protestant practice rather than its being at the very heart of our own tradition....

Catholic Tradition- The Way We Were

The earliest tradition of the Church taught that the best way to convert pagans was by healing them and casting out evil spirits. This goes back to Jesus' own example, when he sent out the Twelve to preach and also commanded them to heal the sick and cast out evil spirits...In those first 350 years, the Christian boast was that any ordinary Christian could heal the sick, while pagans could not. Many Christians were illiterate and from the lower classes; they were not converted by profound arguments about doctrine. Christians were persecuted and at times killed, so they were not able to organize large meetings to hear famous evangelists preaching in coliseums. Most conversions took place privately when neighbors told their neighbors that the Christian God was the only God and that they could test it out by asking Jesus to heal the sick.

Our Experience

The sick who are prayed with often do get healed—or improve.And so the simplest human reason that we should learn to pray for the sick is that they are often healed when we pray. (Copies of *The Practice of Healing Prayer: A How to Guide for Catholics*. (Copies of this book are available at our religious good store for \$10.)

“FOLLOWING JESUS: PRIEST, PROPHET AND KING” is the subject of our next faith formation class. **The class will begin on Thursday, September 13.** The subsequent classes will be on September 27, October 11 and 25, November 8 and 29 and December 13. This DVD series will be presented by Bishop Robert Barron. He is a very popular speaker and has many presentations on YouTube.

We will continue our usual format on Thursday nights for this seven part series. The cost is just \$10 for the series to defray some of the food costs. You may sign up in the foyer or by contacting Fr Conley at frconley@comcast.net

CCD REGISTRATION will be held after all the Masses on this weekend, September 8 & 9, and September 15 & 16, in Sue Wolfe’s office, and next Monday – Thursday from 10AM – 5PM in her office. Middle School starts on Wednesday, September 19th from 7-8:30, and Elementary School starts on September 23rd following the 10:00 Mass.

RETREAT DAY ON DIVINE HEALING ON SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6 FROM 9:30A.M. TO 3:30 P.M. The day will focus on Healing Prayer with presentations on praying for physical and inner healing. The retreat day will conclude with the evening Mass and opportunities to receive Prayer for healing and the Sacrament of Anointing. You can register at www.eventbrite.com/e/healing-prayer-retreat-tickets-49560541915

ALTAR SERVERS are needed for our weekend Masses. Parents with children who are interested should contact Karen Bray at 301-274-4469. Servers must be in the fourth grade or above to be servers.

RELIGIOUS GOODS STORE WILL BE HAVING SELECT ITEMS ON SALE FROM 50 -70% OFF NEXT SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, AFTER ALL THE MASSES.

KNOW OF PARISHIONERS WHO ARE HOMEBOUND? Please contact Fr. Conley or Sister Theresa at the rectory so we can minister to their spiritual needs.

OUR CHOIRS NEED YOUR HELP!!! *We are now asking SMB members to consider joining our 10 AM or our Noon choirs. Our music ministry provides beauty, joy, comfort, inspiration, and prayer. This is possible only with the generous sharing of the time and talent of our committed choir members. If you can carry a tune and want to join a group of loving, caring Christians, please consider joining us! If interested, please call Kaye Oliver at 240-254-2463.*

MASS PRE-SCHOOL PROGRAM - The little ones of the parish are invited to join us for some Sunday fun and learning at the St. Mary’s Angels, Mass Pre-school program for ages infant-five years (infant spots limited) at the 10:00 am Mass. Parents can attend Mass each Sunday, while your children interact with other children in a religious atmosphere. The program will start on September 23rd. Don’t miss out on the fun and a free service. RSVP: Lisa Shumaker sembacet@comcast.net, or (301)870-2220 ext. 11.

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MASS INTENTIONS FOR THIS WEEK:

SUN: 8am Linda Lane, 10am Maurice Long, Sr., 12N: Parishioners, **MON:** 8am Ernest J. Keller, Jr., **TUES:** 8am Anna V. Garity, **WED:** 8am Larry Wood, **THURS:** 8am Joseph L. Jones, **FRI:** 9:30am Betty Sasso, **SAT:** 9am Maurice Long, Sr., 4pm Joseph O’Neill, Sr.

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR DAILY

PRAYERS: Stephen Balenger, Mary Bowes, Deacon Gene Burroughs, Brenda Callahan, Frances Card, Joe Cross, Agnes Curtis, Chuck Davis, Susan Welch Day, Kendall Farrell, George Fassel, Keith Van Gadson, Arlene Gandolfi, Martha Gehring, James Gibson, Zynae Green, Judy Istvan-Windsor, Irma Johnson, Regina Kijesky, Marie Knobel, Lillian Komar, Susie Logan, Jim Middleton, Mary Emma Middleton, Larry Miller, Joseph Mona, Wayne Mullings, Ryan Myers, Joseph Quade, Mary Reeves, Sylvene Savoy, William Leon Savoy, Edna Sweeney, Eva Washington, Beth Weise, Pat Werner, Gary Williams, Brice Zimmer.

OFFERTORY COLLECTION LAST WEEKEND:

\$10,882.83. The unidentified donations totaled \$625.00. We received \$857.00 for our School Support