

COME FORWARD AND BE HEALED: HEALING MASS

From STM Bulletin, May 27 and June 4, 2018

Luke's Gospel tells of the woman afflicted with hemorrhages for years and whom doctors could not cure. Yet when she approached Jesus humbly, and merely touched the tassel on his cloak, she was cured immediately. Jesus seemed surprised when he asked "Who touched me? ... I know that power has gone out from me" (Luke 8:45-46). The woman, trembling, fell down before him, testified to all present what had happened. Jesus said, "Daughter, your faith has saved you; go in peace."



Jesus performed many signs and wonders to proclaim His Kingdom of Mercy. He especially healed many who came to Him asking to be healed. He also sent out His disciples to cure the sick in His Name by the power of the Holy Spirit they received from Him (Luke 9:1-6; John 20:22). This powerful Grace remains in His Church today in the Sacrament of Healing.

Signs and wondrous works of the Spirit continue to be visible demonstrations of God's love for us today. Persons are healed physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. *Unleash the Gospel* encourages us to reach out to Jesus in Reconciliation and the Anointing of the Sick, both Sacraments of Healing. We are meant to pray for healing for ourselves and for others, and of course we do at every Mass within the Prayers of the Faithful. Healing is a gift to encourage us on the path towards discipleship and full trust in the Lord.

Let us reach out to the Lord as the woman in Luke's Gospel did, and come to Him in trust. Let us humbly place ourselves in His hands and open our hearts to the power of His love and mercy

Bless the Lord, my soul; and do not forget all his gifts, Who pardons all your sins, and heals all your ills ... and crowns you with mercy and compassion (Psalm 103:2-4)

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We are each invited in a special way to encounter the healing mercy of Jesus Christ at this Healing Mass. We are all in need of healing because we are all wounded by original sin and by our attachment to sin.

What might we expect at a Healing Mass?

Catholics believe healing occurs during all Masses. God wants to heal us and does so by the power of the Holy Spirit. We may prepare ourselves for healing by being open to the Spirit, inviting Him into our hearts with an "expectant faith." At a Healing Mass, prayers are offered for our individual needs. We should present our needs to Jesus, Divine Physician. Priests and deacons - and us, praying for each other - are instruments of the Lord's mercy, while it is the Spirit who heals.

Before Mass, we should pray about how we wish to be healed, trusting that our Lord knows our needs better than we do. We should take advantage of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, if possible, before Mass. We should pray for specific physical, emotional, or spiritual healing. We might ask for healing of damaged relationships, troubling memories, feelings of shame, for relief from spiritual or psychological barriers to doing what we ought, or from difficulties we have forgiving ourselves and

others. We should offer prayers for healing of others. We might also invoke the intercession of particular favored saints on our behalf.

The service includes being prayed over by the priest or deacon who may touch our head, shoulder or hands. He will anoint us with blessed oil. God answers our prayers, mysteriously, as He wills and at a time of His choosing which may be immediate or gradual. People react in different ways. There may be sensations of quiet consolation or spiritual intimacy, simple joy at being prayed over, feelings of warmth ... or nothing at all. Some have profound, deeply moving experiences of the Spirit that may be manifested physically.

Part of healing is the ability to be at peace with whatever happens, and feeling God's presence along the way. It is growing toward an ever deeper surrender to the power of the Holy Spirit. It is an ongoing growth in holiness in response to consistent, regular prayer for healing, even after our prayers are answered. So no matter what, let us keep praying and thanking God for His mercy and love.

(The June 4th column was based, in part, on writings by Maria Muratore, Catholic Diocese of Raleigh, and Lindsay Steele, *The Catholic Messenger*).