

Who are the “they” in the Gospel today? It is “they” who told Jesus about Simon’s mother-in-law. It is “they” who brought him to the sick or to those possessed with demons. Besides his immediate disciples, the passage in the Gospel of Mark immediately before this reading offers us a glimpse, it says Jesus’ “fame spread throughout the whole region of Galilee.” In this Gospel, it becomes clear that the “they” means more than just his closest disciples, but those who were close to those who needed cured and healed.

As Jesus’ fame has spread throughout the whole world, the “they” in today’s Gospel has become “us”: you and I. We are the ones who are invited to be cured and healed, or to seek that for those that we are close to. We are the ones who invite others to come to be cured and healed. We need look no further than the RCIA held in the Dining Hall every Wednesday evening to know that there are evangelists and disciples in our midst that bring others to Jesus.

Of the two acts, the curing and healing of Jesus, I think the cure is very important. But, I also believe that healing is more important. What is important is not only a cure, but an inner healing. A healing that results in a transformation which makes us true followers of Jesus.

Earlier in this first chapter of the Gospel of Mark, the Evangelist tells us about the Baptism of Jesus. At the Baptism, St. Mark says that Jesus had come up out of the water and he saw the Heavens open and a Spirit descend on Him like a dove. Then a voice came from the Heavens saying, “this is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased.”

Mark tells us that healings are going to take place. He explains that there is no longer is there a separation of Heaven and Earth, but rather, God has come to be part of our human needs. He tells us that there is a new creation and because the voice from the heavens said, “this is my Son,” he is telling us that this new creation is the Son of God and that his Son will bring “salvation.” “Salvation”, which is Greek means ‘healing’ and ‘justice.’

A cure is very different from healing. While a cure aims to return one’s body to what it was in the past, healing uses what is present to move us more deeply into awareness. Healings can happen without a cure. Someone stricken with cancer, who is healed, gives careful thought to the meaning of their lives, what they have to let go of and what they want to cherish.

Let there be no doubt. Jesus cures, yesterday, today, and tomorrow. His cures are a sign of the Kingdom of God. His cures are also an invitation for us to go deeper. His cures invite us to healing. These cures are signs of God's loving response to our own human needs. But interpreting this loving response, is meant for healing, to change our minds, to cause a paradigm shift, and to initiate new ways of being with and acting toward others.

In today's Gospel, Simon's mother-in-law was not only cured. But, look at how she acts after her cure. She gets up and submits to God's will, which led her to service. Jesus' touch became her transfusion – his life flowing into her life. Today, at this table, we will be touched by Jesus in the Eucharist. It also is a transfusion of Christ into our lives. Eucharist does not necessarily bring about a cure, but it does bring about healing. God's service to Simon's mother-in-law became her service to others.

Cures, healings, and service to others have a very personal meaning to me.

Two days ago marked the fifth anniversary of my ordination to the diaconate. Jesus has touched me in many ways. Whether it was our pastor, Fr. Paul Schott, who asked me 25 years ago to consider becoming a deacon. Or, Fr. Schott's return 15 years ago that stirred the passion in me to turn toward a life of service. Whether it was the miraculous healing of our daughter 15 years ago from a tragic car accident or Fr. Mark Seitz coming to the hospital at 11 PM that first night for the Sacrament of the Sick, to be with us and to pray with us. Or, the fact that parish priests kept coming daily to our daughter's hospital bedside for the next 3 months. Or, was it the kindness of a neuro-surgeon from Atlanta that called me on my cell phone just to talk about my daughter's health. Or, a friend in Boston, who would call to pray and lift up my spirits. Or, a friend's daughter, who lived in Switzerland, sending my daughter a stuffed cow. Or, the many parishioners in St. Rita's prayer chain that prayed for my daughter daily.

These actions brought about my healing as God was curing my daughter. While Jesus' touch brought about a restoration of our daughter's health, these actions and her miraculous healing brought about a profound change in me.

Many in our community, or their loved ones, are now going through or have gone through similar experience of healing. Our prayers, our support, our love can, at

times, bring a cure. However, our prayers, our support, and our love can most definitely bring about healing.

I pray that you will not have to go through the despair that my wife and I felt as a parent. But, this healing led me to a view the world and others differently or as St. Paul in Romans tells us to “see the good in all things.” It has called me to a life of service to others. It has called me to love others with all my heart, with all my soul, and with all my mind.

This life of service is reflected in my job, in my view of others, in my view of God’s creation.

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