

St. Laurence High School Home Study

February 8, 2026

Sacraments of Healing

This week is all about healing. When Jesus walked on this earth, he displayed his divine power to restore the whole human person — body and soul. That same power was shared with his Apostles and their successors. Through the Sacraments of Healing, Jesus comes to meet and heal each of us.

GOAL

The goal of this week is to show teens that Christ's healing power is present in the sacraments and encourage them to take advantage of the Sacrament of Reconciliation on February 26 from 6:30-8:30 pm.

MAIN POINTS

1. Jesus, the Divine Physician, healed people's bodies and souls throughout his ministry. This mission of healing was passed to his Apostles.
2. Through the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick, we encounter Christ's healing power, which restores our souls and, sometimes, our bodies.
3. God wants our renewal and healing. Frequently receiving his grace through the sacraments heals us from the wounds of sin and leads us to new life.

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 10:7-8 | Mark 2:1-12 | John 20:22-23 | James 5:14-15

CATECHISM: 1420-1422 | 1440-1446 | 1484 | 1496 | 1499 | 1503-1511 | 1532

KEY TERMS

Grace - The free and undeserved gift that God gives us to respond to our vocation to become his adopted children. As sanctifying grace, God shares his divine life and friendship with us in a habitual gift, a stable and supernatural disposition that enables the soul to live with God, to act by his love. As actual grace, God gives us the help to conform our lives to his will. Sacramental grace and special graces are gifts of the Holy Spirit to help us live out our Christian vocation. (CCC 1996-2000, 2003)

Healing - Restoring that which was sick or hurt to health. Jesus, the Divine Physician, has the power to heal both our soul and body. (CCC 1503)

Main Point 1: Jesus, the Divine Physician, healed people's bodies and souls throughout his ministry. This mission of healing was passed to his Apostles.

- Have you ever thought about how wild some of the stories from the Gospels are? Take, for example, the story of Jesus healing the paralytic man. Take time to grab your bible and read Mark 2:1-12.
- Jesus is teaching in a crowded house. The people are so packed that no one can reach him. Some men try to bring their paralyzed friend before Jesus because they have heard that Jesus has the power to heal. However, they can't get through to Jesus, so they decide to tear apart the roof and lower the man down into Jesus' presence.
- Upon seeing the man and the faith of his friends, Jesus forgives the man's sins. Some nearby religious leaders accuse Jesus of blasphemy because only God can forgive sins. In order to validate his power, Jesus also commands the man to get up and walk. The man does so, and everyone is astounded.
- We sometimes lose the shock value of Jesus' actions because we are familiar with the stories. If we try to put ourselves in this situation, we realize how amazing this event must have been. • Imagine for a moment that you are at an unusually crowded Mass one Sunday. The parish has to use overflow seating, and some people still have to stand. The church is completely packed. Father begins his homily, and about five minutes in, you hear some commotion in the back of the church. Some people are wheeling a paralyzed person all the way up to the priest. The priest says he forgives the man's sins and then commands him to walk. To everyone's surprise, the man gets up and walks.
- What would your response be? Astonishment? Disbelief? Confusion? Maybe even a touch of fear and wonder?
- Above all, one question would linger in your mind: Who is this priest who has the authority to forgive sins and heal?
- This is the sort of situation many people in the Gospels faced. During his public ministry, Jesus healed people in various ways. Each time, the crowds were left astonished. There was a supernatural power at work in Jesus.
- Not only did they have to reckon with physical healings, but Jesus also claimed to forgive sins. Only God can forgive sins, yet with a power unknown to anyone else, Jesus stood in God's place and forgave the wrongs that people did.

- These realities were key parts of Jesus' ministry. They show us that Jesus is concerned with our complete well-being. He came to restore the whole human person — body and soul. In God's kingdom, life and healing reign supreme. (CCC 1503)
- Here is the craziest part. The same power that was present in Jesus was also given to his Apostles. As Jesus healed people's ailments and forgave their sins, he commanded his Apostles to do the same. (Mark 10:78, Mark 16:15-18)
- We see this happening throughout the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. Peter, John, Paul, and others heal the sick, cast out demons, and offer forgiveness of sins in the name of Jesus. (Mark 6:12-13, Acts 3:1-7, Acts 14:8-10)

Main Point 2: Through the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick, we encounter Christ's healing power, which restores our souls and, sometimes, our bodies.

- The ministry of healing given to the Apostles was passed on throughout the generations to their successors, the bishops. This ministry of healing is a fundamental aspect of the Church and our faith. (CCC 1442)
- The Catechism puts it like this: Project and read the following from CCC 1421: "The Lord Jesus Christ, physician of our souls and bodies, who forgave the sins of the paralytic and restored him to bodily health, has willed that his Church continue, in the power of the Holy Spirit, his work of healing and salvation, even among her own members."
- The Church is supposed to continue the work of healing that Jesus initiated in his public ministry. Through the sacraments and the working of the Holy Spirit, we see this happening every day. The question is: do we appreciate what's happening right in front of us?
- We tend to view physical healing as a greater miracle than spiritual healing. People walk in and out of the confessional, receiving forgiveness for their sins, and we don't bat an eye. However, if someone were to walk in on crutches and walk out healed, we would be amazed.

Physical Healing: Jesus' power to restore our bodies to physical health is still very much at work in the world. Sometimes, this happens through the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, but there are many other ways that people receive miraculous physical healings. Whether it's through the prayer of fellow Christians gifted with a charism for healing, visiting a sacred site like the shrine at Our Lady of Lourdes, or asking for the intercession of the saints, God's grace is constantly restoring people to health. One example of this is the healing of Sr. Marie Pierre. Information about Sr. Marie Pierre can be found at <https://www.thedivinemercy.org/articles/my-miraculous-cure>

- The reality is that spiritual healing is greater than physical healing. This is exactly what Jesus reveals when he heals the paralytic.
- The man's friends are expecting Jesus to heal his paralysis. That's the whole reason they work so hard to get their friend into Jesus' presence. But what Jesus says in response astonishes everyone. He doesn't first tell the man to get up and walk. Rather, he says something completely unexpected: "My son, your sins are forgiven." (Mark 2:5)
- How amazing a moment that must have been for the man! He came seeking healing for his leg and instead received healing for his soul. What he'd done wrong, the ways he's failed and hurt others, the darkness and pain in his heart were all forgiven.
- The greatest malady is not a physical ailment; it's evil and sin. Jesus renews us from within. The one who is capable of healing the body is also capable of doing the much more difficult and amazing thing: healing the soul. (CCC 1488)
- Doctors today can heal broken legs and countless diseases or ailments with the right medicine and a healthy dose of time. However, they can never forgive sins. They have no remedy for the illness of the soul.
- Jesus comes to restore and renew our relationship with God by forgiving our sins and giving us the strength to love and trust God even in the midst of suffering. He goes to the root of the problem. Like a skilled doctor, he wants to remove the source of the infection. Sin taints everything. By helping us overcome it, Jesus sets us on the path to true healing. This happens through the sacraments. (CCC 1505)
- Every priest who has been ordained by the successors of the Apostles is given a share in their authority. In the name of Jesus and by his power, they forgive sins and offer healing through the sacraments.
- Two sacraments in particular are associated with healing. In fact, we refer to them as the Sacraments of Healing. They are the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick.
- Anointing sick people with oil is an ancient practice within the Church. During his earthly ministry, Jesus sent out his disciples to anoint the sick with oil. Many of them were healed. In the early Christian communities, we hear about Christians anointing and praying for one another. (Mark 6:12-13, James 5:14-15)
- The Church continues these practices through the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. This sacrament is offered to anyone who, on account of age or infirmity, is in some grave danger. (CCC 1514-1515)

- The Anointing of the Sick strengthens the recipient with the Holy Spirit. It enables them to unite their suffering with Jesus and endure trials with peace and courage. At times, this sacrament may even lead to physical healing. (CCC 1532)
- In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we come face-to-face with Jesus in the person of the priest. Acting through the priest, Jesus forgives our sins just as he forgave the sins of the paralyzed man and the other people he encountered during his ministry.

Main Point 3: God wants our renewal and healing. Frequently receiving his grace through the sacraments heals us from the wounds of sin and leads us to new life.

- We believe that grace is poured out upon us in the sacraments. Through them, we really encounter Jesus' healing power. They are not just symbols; they actually transform us.
- Jesus desires to meet us in these sacraments. His healing hand is always extended to us. He knows we are sick and in need of a physician. When we are willing to show him our wounds and ask for healing, he lovingly binds and takes care of us.
- We cannot receive the Anointing of the Sick unless we are in grave danger. However, we can encounter Christ's healing power in the Sacrament of Reconciliation as frequently as we need to. (CCC 1457-1458, 1464, 1514-1515)
- Even if we haven't committed a mortal sin, it's still a good practice to go to Confession regularly.

Mortal vs. Venial Sins Not all sins are equal. The Catholic Church acknowledges two types of sins: mortal and venial. Mortal sin is a serious choice that knowingly damages your friendship with God. Venial sin does not break that friendship completely, but it weakens it and can make it harder to hear God's voice. Mortal sin destroys charity in our hearts and separates us from God. When we go to confession, we receive God's mercy and grace, and our relationship with him is restored. When we commit a mortal sin, it is absolutely essential to seek healing in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. A person in a state of mortal sin cannot receive Holy Communion until their relationship with God and the community has been restored through the sacrament. Venial sins weaken charity. They are smaller offences that make it harder for us to grow in virtue and to love God and others the way we ought to. Confession helps us guard against venial sin and strengthens us with God's grace. Each time we go to confession, we let God heal us and renew and strengthen our ability to love him and live by his commands. (CCC 1854-1864)

- The healing we experience in Confession is multifaceted. On a natural level, it is beneficial to share our struggles and failures with someone else in a supportive environment.

- Confession also helps alleviate feelings of guilt and shame. When we sin, we rightly feel like we messed up and are ashamed of our behavior. These feelings help us know we did something wrong and lead us to ask for forgiveness. However, God doesn't want us to dwell in this shame. Through Confession, we encounter God's profound love that reaches us even in the midst of our sins and are assured that we are forgiven.

Scrupulosity: *Sometimes, people can become obsessed with sin. They are constantly anxious about whether a certain behavior was a mortal or venial sin, unsure about whether they had fully confessed all their mortal sins in a previous confession, unable to distinguish temptation from actually committing a sin, or experience similar struggles. This condition is called scrupulosity, and it's a serious struggle for many Catholics. There is a healthy concern that every person should have regarding sin. We should try to avoid it, confess mortal sins when we commit them, and be vigilant and aware of temptations. At the same time, it is absolutely essential that we recognize that God's love is greater than any sin. Our sins should never eclipse the abundant mercy, grace, and love that God bestows on each of us. When sin becomes the central focus of all our spiritual and emotional energy instead of God's love, it's a good indicator that something is off, and we might want to look for help. If you find yourself wrestling with scrupulosity, try to find a regular confessor who is aware of your struggles and can guide you through them. Pray for a greater understanding and experience of God's love and mercy. If necessary, connect with a professional Catholic therapist who has experience walking with people in this area. Find a good and faithful mentor who can meet with you regularly to talk about life and help you sort out what's going on in your mind and soul. Above all, don't keep quiet and simply struggle with this alone.*

- Along with this, we also experience a sense of liberation. Confession reminds us that we are not slaves to sin but beloved sons and daughters who are always welcomed back into our Father's arms. It gives us the strength to live out of this identity and resist temptation in the future.

- Sin separates us from God and the Church. It ruptures our relationship with God and cuts us off from the community of believers. When we sin, we hurt the people around us and the whole Body of Christ. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a way to heal and rectify both our relationship with God and with others. Through it, we are reconciled to God and restored to communion with the Church. It's a way of acknowledging our wrongs and asking forgiveness from those we hurt. (CCC 1440)

- Confession is a powerful tool for overcoming patterns of sin. You may find yourself confessing the same sins over and over. However, with God's grace and the desire to amend your life, consistency coupled with the grace of the sacraments can help you overcome your struggles.

- Jesus desires to heal and renew us. Through the sacraments he offers us freedom from our past wrongs and regrets, peace in place of anxiety and guilt, new life and grace that helps us live as children of God, dominion and order in place of disorder, the strength to grow in virtue and resist temptation, and above all, a purer and more ardent love for God. (CCC 1496)

- Jesus gave the Church the Sacraments of Healing because he knew we would need them. His mercy is greater than our sins; his healing is the only remedy for our wounds. The only path from sickness to health is being open to the hands of the healer.

Make plans to go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation on February 26 6:30-8:30 pm.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

The following text is called the Prayer of Absolution. It is offered by the priest during the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The priest, acting in the person of Christ, speaks these words of forgiveness over the person confessing their sins. *Take some time to read and meditate on each line of the Prayer of Absolution that the priest offers during Confession. Write down what stands out or any thoughts or feelings evoked by each line:*

God, the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of his Son has reconciled the world to himself and poured out the Holy Spirit for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church may God grant you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

God, the Father of mercies

through the death and resurrection of his Son

has reconciled the world to himself

and poured out the Holy Spirit for the forgiveness of sins

through the ministry of the Church

may God grant you pardon and peace

and I absolve you from your sins

in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

Reflection questions to answer:

1. What stood out to you from the Prayer of Absolution? What do you think God is showing you through that?

2. Is it hard to admit that you might need healing? Why or why not?
3. Jesus once said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." (Mark 2:17) How does that statement make you feel?
4. Do you think of our church more as a place of perfect believers or a place where people come to be healed? What gives you that impression?
5. What do you think about the Sacrament of Reconciliation? How do you feel after going to Confession compared to before?

Make plans to go to Confession at St. Laurence on Thursday February 26 at 6:30.

HEALING HANDS REFLECTION

Take a comfortable position. Dim the lights if possible and maybe even play low, instrumental music in the background.

We're going to take a few moments to try a type of prayer called Ignatian meditation, in which you imagine yourself in a story from Scripture.

Begin with the Sign of the Cross.

First, listen as we read the passage that follows. Try to track the overall narrative and understand the basic flow of the story.

Grab your bible and read Matthew 8:1-3 aloud slowly.

Now, we'll try to imagine ourselves in the story. Let's start by picturing the scene in our minds.

Where are you?

What do the surroundings look like?

Are you alone?

Are there other people there with you?

What's the weather like?

Take some time to envision the scene now.

Pause for a moment.

Imagine yourself in the position of the leper. You have been completely cut off from your community. No one dares to touch or come near you. You can't go to social or religious

gatherings. You have to announce your unclean presence when anyone comes near. You have been forced to live isolated and alone.

How do you feel?

What is in your heart?

What burdens do you carry?

Pause for a moment.

In your mind's eye, look down at your hands.

What do they look like?

Are they covered in sores, wounds, and bandages?

What signs of sickness are evident?

Pause for a moment.

Now, you hear a small crowd approaching. It's not clear how many people are present. Listen to the voices approaching.

What do you feel as you hear people drawing near?

Are you afraid to be seen?

Do you feel a sense of shame or frustration?

Pause for a moment.

Imagine the crowd coming into view, all surrounding one man — Jesus. How many people are there?

What are they wearing?

What does Jesus look like?

What is he doing?

What happens in your heart as you watch him draw near?

Pause for a moment.

The crowd notices you.

How do they respond?

What do the looks on their faces communicate?

How do you feel being seen by all of them?

Pause for a moment.

Jesus steps forward from the crowd and looks at you. Meet his gaze with your eyes.

What do you see?

What do you feel?

How does he look at you?

Pause for a moment.

Envision running up to Jesus' feet and kneeling down. Feel your heart racing. You speak the words of the leper, "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean." Feel the time elapse between your words and Jesus' response.

Pause for a moment.

See Jesus reach out his hand and touch you. Let him meet you in the midst of your isolation and hurt. Feel the tenderness of his hands as he shows how much he loves you, not just with words but with actions. Everyone else keeps their distance, but he comes close. As he does so, he replies, "I will; be clean."

Sit with Jesus in that moment.

What do you feel?

What goes through your mind?

What happens to your body?

Pause for a few moments.

Jesus comes to each of us in our sickness, pain, hurt, and sinfulness. He is no stranger to those who are wounded and needy. The Divine Physician longs to heal us; we just need to open ourselves to him. Take a moment in silence to speak to Jesus, telling him where you need healing and inviting him into those areas of your life.

Pause for an extended period.

Then, close with the following prayer: *Lord Jesus, You invite each of us to come before you with our needs. You offer mercy and healing to all those who humbly seek you. Heal our wounded hearts, cleanse our sick souls, shower your mercy and grace upon us. As you never tire of healing us, may we never tire of seeking your healing. Amen.*