

Healers in the Name of Christ

From September to June (next summer we'll include July,) I spend around forty-five minutes every Wednesday at Southwick Village where I have an Ecumenical Prayer Service. We usually get somewhere between 4-7 people. They tend to get part of the service for the week to come. I also use them as a test congregation, if you will, for part of the sermon that has developed for the coming Sunday. The little congregation has become quite comfortable with me as they engage in dialogue with me during the reflection period. It is part of that conversation that changed the sermon for this week.

I spoke to this group about how we can all be healers. Some folks would wonder how they could be like Jesus and heal the sick, make the deaf hear, and the mute speak. But I spoke to them about what they could do right there at Southwick Village. Most of the people who come to the service live in what they jokingly and lovingly call "the big house" with their own small apartment. They have told me time and again that each of them had been made to feel so welcome when they got there and now they like to do the same thing to new residents who come to live there. But they also serve as ministers to each other.

One of them also made reference to an accident that happened to her and someone came to her rescue. "Could healing be when someone falls down and a friend helps them up, gets them back to their apartment, and brings them a bag of ice?" I exclaimed, "Did you fall?" She said, sheepishly, "Yes." "Then that person was a healer for you, wasn't she?"

So many people rely on healing of all sorts every day. Don't raise your hands but how many of us are on cholesterol meds, blood pressure meds, blood thinners, chemo, anxiety meds, thyroid, arthritis, etc.? Those keep us healthy, and to some extent, heal us. Others among us are nurses, physicians, dentists, physician assistants, chiropractors, pharmacists, massage therapists,

other hospital employees or we had served in one of those positions before retirement. You were directly involved in healing. How many of us rely on glasses or hearing aids. I can raise my hand for both of those. I had LASIK surgery but still have to wear reading glasses but also wear a hearing aid in my right ear. I am told that the other one could be coming in the next few years.

God has blessed us with people who have learned the technology and chemistry to help us with so many ailments. Some of us might be tempted to think, though, "I don't do any of those things. How can I be a healer?" That brings us back to our friends at Southwick Village. We can be healers in many different ways. We can listen to someone when they are feeling down or blue. Go to the pharmacy or store for someone. Bring an ice pack. We can bring a meal or give of ourselves in other ways. We can serve a meal at the soup kitchen, volunteer at Blessed Buys/Henrietta's Thrift Shop. In this election year, we are certainly called to be healers when the factions of red and blue cut deep and the insults get hurled from both sides.

We have been blessed by God and given the example of the Messiah, our Savior, as the true healer. We may not be able to make the deaf hear or the mute speak, but we can certainly show that how we as followers of Christ bring the message alive in the way we offer healing. When we do this, we can also follow Jesus' example about not telling what we have done.

Jesus tried to keep his healing quiet as he told people "Don't speak of this to anyone." In "religious circles" this is referred to as the "Messianic secret." Jesus didn't think it was time for people to know about what he had done, or, did he know that, much like us, some people just had to tell "someone" so that the news would spread? We just don't know!

Here is what we DO know: we can start to be healed spiritually through Christ. We can follow the Word of God in our Gospel message. We can even follow the words of James in his

letter that we simply must do more than say, “stay warm and well fed” while offering neither clothing or food to alleviate the suffering. In order for us to be healers, it takes a delicate combination of both. We can pray with people, we can study the Scriptures in Bible Study (coming soon to a church near you,) and we can put our faith into action.

Let us work together to be healers. Let us allow others to be healers for us. Let us be the kind of Church here in Westfield, Southwick, or West Granville that people will want to join.

And, lastly, let us do this in the name of Christ. Amen.