

Homily: 10th Sunday: Cycle C: 2016: 1Kgs 17: 17-24; Ps 30: Gal 1:11-19; Lk: 11-17

“God’s Healing through the Sacraments”

1. **Baptism and Confession:** As we hear in the readings this week-end, God heals His people through His holy prophets, through His Son Jesus, and now through the Church. I want to focus in this homily on the gift of some of the Sacraments in this regard. The first Sacrament that gives us a special healing is Baptism. Most of us received our Baptism when we were infants - and so as free gift God healed us the original sin, or state of spiritual alienation from Him, which all humans with the exception of Jesus and the Mary are born into. The healing waters of baptism make us adopted sons and daughters of God. Those who were baptized later in life are not only healed of original sin, but all actual sins up to that point in their life and sometimes even receive a physical healing if they are struggling with some malady. After we are baptized then the normal way we receive healing from sin is through the Sacrament of Confession. Many Catholics forget this part of that beautiful Sacrament as we humbly approach the Divine Physician in the person of His priest and ask for forgiveness and for the healing of sin and the effects of sin in our life and in the people around us. I think if more of us realized the healing quality of Confession, both for soul, in our minds and hearts and wills, and even in our bodies by reducing or eliminating the stress and guilt and anxiety which are common effects of sin, more of us would take advantage of that gift on a more frequent basis. Please do so.
2. **The Eucharist:** Again we sometimes forget that the receiving the Body and Blood of Christ in Holy Communion is meant to heal us on all levels. The more faith we receive the Lord with in Communion, the more we benefit in this regard. This is why we always need to carefully examine our souls before receiving the Lord in Holy Communion, to make sure, to the best of our knowledge, that we never receive Him in the state of **mortal sin** - because if we do receive Him with mortal sin on our soul, not only are we not healed, but we are spiritually driven farther away from the Lord’s healing because of receiving Him sacrilegiously. But if we do receive Him with faith and love and a contrite heart, striving for deeper holiness, not only are we drawn closer to His Sacred Heart, but by His healing grace we become more and more like Him in all areas of our life, and the virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity shine forth more and more in our life on a daily basis.

3. **The Anointing of the Sick:** Finally the Lord gives us the beautiful healing Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick to help us on our earthly journey. Yes we all face maladies of various sorts of soul and body at different times in our life on earth. The Lord wants to be there to help us specifically at those difficult moments with a special sacrament of anointing. It is powerful. I have seen this in my years as a priest. The Anointing of the Sick is both for those who are dealing with serious illness or before a serious operation, and also for those who are getting ready to see the Lord at the end of their earthly life. This Sacrament is no longer in the Church's understanding just for the end of earthly life, as part of the Last Rites of the Church along with Confession and final Holy Communion or Viaticum – if the dying person can receive Confession and Communion. Some of the older parishioners may remember that notion, and how people were afraid if the priest was coming to their house to anoint them as that meant they were going to die soon. Now the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick can be given to anyone who is seriously ill. Like the other Sacraments it presupposes one is striving to live in God's friendship in the state of grace. **If one has been away from practicing the Faith, he or she needs to first go to Confession before receiving the Anointing of the Sick.** The only exception to this would be if one is in a medical coma or if one can no longer think clearly or speak audibly, and so then the Church will give the Sacrament of Anointing to the person, but always on the presupposition that if he or she comes out of the coma or recovers the ability to think clearly and speak, as soon as they are able to do so, they need to receive the Sacrament of Confession from a priest. Lay people and sometimes even priests forget that essential teaching of our Faith in regards to the Anointing of the Sick. It's also important to point out this special anointing is fundamentally different than a charismatic anointing with some type of holy oil from the shrine of a saint which would only be a sacramental, a special blessing for healing – but not a Sacrament. And remember only a validly ordained priest can administer the actual Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. Truly in God's mercy this Sacrament indeed heals people, not only spiritually to give them the strength to endure their illness to their and the Church's spiritual benefit in union with Christ Crucified, but sometimes physical healings can occur. An amazing reality! Thank you Lord for your merciful kindness in all the Sacraments of healing. May the Lord heal all of us, in the ways we need it, in His merciful love. God bless you.