



Archdiocese of San Antonio
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Homily for Cathedral Mass for Our Lady of Lourdes
February 11, 2015

On this World Day of Prayer for the Sick, and on this Feast Day of Our Lady of Lourdes, the whole Church reflects on our Lord as the healer of our lives, of our souls, and even of our bodies. Our Lady has called many of us to remember the healing power of God through her apparition at Lourdes, and through the many miraculous healings that have taken place there on account of her intercession. I have asked our parishes throughout the Archdiocese to rejoice in the healing power of God in a special way today. In this world we experience a great deal of brokenness, but our Lord calls us to be eternally healed.

This was the reason he first gave the dietary laws to his people Israel. There were foods that would have been harmful to them, and so the Lord initiated rules of sound living among his people to demonstrate how he wanted them to be truly healthy. But in Christ, we have gone beyond simple healthy eating, and are looking for a healing that goes deeply to the core of who we

are. Christ has come to heal us mind, body, and soul. While certainly the things we eat can still harm us, our Lord wants us to remember more deeply the ways we can be broken and harmed by those things that come out of us, rather than what we take in. The list he gives us in Mark's Gospel demonstrates the ways we can separate ourselves from divine blessedness, the ways we can hurt each other, and the way we can injure our participation in eternal life. "Evil thoughts, unchastity, heft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, licentiousness, envy, blasphemy, arrogance, folly", these are the things that defile.

However, our Church today also remembers that sometimes we will fall into brokenness. We will lose ourselves to the worldliness around us. We take our eyes off the example of Christ, the example given by Our Lady, and we find ourselves defiled and hurt. Often, we disobey our Lord, just like our first parents in the Garden. Other times, the wear and tear of this life can bring us low, or sometimes tragic illnesses befall us through no fault of our own. For this reason our Lord gave us the Sacraments. This day we will celebrate the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, that all who are physically, mentally, and spiritually unwell can come and draw fully from the healing balm of our Lord's great grace. This Sacrament is not reserved for those on their last breath – though certainly it can be given to those

suffering people as well. But this Sacrament exists to lift us up and helps us return to the life of blessedness and grace.

In the beginning, our God breathed his own life into us. We humans have carried that divine life ever since. This is a gift that we simply cannot describe. The life of the God of the Universe enlivens your body, drives your mind, and brightens your soul. Never forget this great gift, so that we can foster it well. Rejoice today that God offers us his great healing – especially in the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Anointing of the Sick.

In 1858, the Blessed Mother repeatedly appeared to St. Bernadette. We celebrate her message to us again today as the whole world prays for the sick, the lost, the suffering, and the broken among us. May we give our brokenness to the Lord today through her intercession, the intercession of Our Lady of Lourdes, and accept the healing that comes from on high. United once again by the divine life we share, may we go forth in a new way today proclaiming the glory of God, who heals us in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.