

IMPRINT

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THE WOUNDED HEALER

Finding the One who
can heal my brokenness
and whose love can
raise me up.

*As she wept,
she bent over
to look into the
tomb and saw
two angels in white ...
They asked her,
“Woman, why
are you crying?”*

(Jn 20:11-13)



What do you want Me to do for you? (Mt 20:32)

Nothing in our life, no suffering or pain, goes unseen by God. Your brokenness does not disqualify you from His love. In fact, it is quite the opposite: each place of brokenness that we allow Jesus to touch and to heal becomes a wellspring of grace overflowing with love and peace.

Jesus knows intimately what it means to suffer because He entered into our suffering and redeemed us through it. Jesus Christ is a wounded healer. When God became man, it was to deliver us from the suffering of this world. "By His wounds you have been healed" (1 Pet 2:24).

Jesus sees the places where we are blind (Mk 8: 22-26), where we are lame (Jn 5:1-15), where we are bleeding (Mt 9:20-22), and His heart is moved in love. These are the places He desires to encounter us, to console us, and to place us in the loving embrace of God the Father. When we allow Jesus to touch our wounds, we experience a peace the world cannot give. It is precisely from these places that His victory shines most brightly, defying all human logic. It is in seeing the impossible become possible, bringing life from death, that He increases our faith.



from death to life

In the Gospels, as Jesus encounters those who suffer, He asks, "What do you want me to do for you?" (Mt 20:32; Mk 10:51; Lk 18:41). In this question lies an invitation to look into the depths of our hearts, beyond what the world tells us we need, to the truth that Love is the answer to every human longing.

What do you want Jesus to do for you?

As we celebrate His rising this Easter season, may you encounter anew His healing touch and His thirst to bring about the glory of the Resurrection in your life. May Our Lady be your guide and lead you in hope. Know of our prayers for you and your loved ones at this time. Blessed Easter!

In Christ, Our Life,

Mother Agnes Mary, SV
Mother Agnes Mary, SV

BEHOLD

I make all things new. (Rev 21:5)

by Sr. Lucia Christi, SV

“Man is a relational being. And if his first, fundamental relationship is disturbed — his relationship with God — then nothing else can be truly in order. This is where the priority lies in Jesus’ message and ministry: before all else, He wants to point man toward the essence of his malady, and to show him — if you are not healed *there*, then however many good things you may find, you are not truly healed.”
-Pope Benedict XVI

We all need healing from something.

We may find ourselves in need of healing from illness or injury; from addiction; from emotional wounds, such as rejection, abandonment, or shame. We may be hurting from broken relationships and accompanying fear, or an inability to trust others; from distorted views of ourselves or others; from the effects of our own sin or the sins of others. Since the fall of Adam and Eve, suffering is part of the reality we face. But we know it is not the end. We rebel against pain; we desire healing because we know in our hearts that we were not made for suffering.

And here is the good news: Jesus has revealed Himself to be our Healer. He, the Divine Physician, knows the intricacies of our hearts and where we are in need of restoration! The remedy He provides is so delicately and tenderly attuned to each of our histories, wounds, circumstances, and our faith.

Remember Jesus healing in the Gospels: some people He heals immediately, without their even asking (like Peter’s mother-in-law); some, He heals in stages (like the blind man who at first saw “people like trees walking” [Mk 8:24] before he gained his full sight). For others, He heals with a simple word from a distance (like the royal official’s son). Sometimes Jesus spends all

day and night healing everyone who comes to Him; at other times, He says He must move on, because He has to preach the Gospel in other towns.

Ultimately, Jesus comes to heal every one of us, but perhaps not in the way that we expect. This life is passing away, and all suffering will eventually cease. So His greatest concern is for our salvation. He desires to heal us from our deepest wound: our sin. So even if we don’t experience physical healing now, we know with certainty that Jesus is working to bring about healing in our souls, by constantly calling us to return to Him with repentance and offering us His forgiveness. This is the healing that leads to eternal life.

No matter where or how we may be wounded, the unshakable truth is that our life is good. Each one of us was created by Love, in Love, for Love, and this can never be damaged, lost, or taken away. We find healing in this truth, in the total security of God’s love for us. And as we believe it more and more in this life, we come closer to what we will perfectly know and receive in heaven: where “[God] will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain ... The one who sat on the throne said, ‘Behold, I make all things new’” (Rev 21:4-5).

MICHAEL'S HEALING

An interview with Michelle Schachle

by Sr. Mary Margaret Hope, SV
and Sr. Zelig Maria Louis, SV

Michelle Schachle and her husband Daniel never expected to be at the center of the miracle leading to the Beatification of Knights of Columbus Founder Blessed Fr. Michael J. McGivney (1852-1890). But God's healing power streamed into their Dickson, Tennessee family in an extraordinary way when Michelle was pregnant with Michael, their 13th child.

Can you share a little of your own story?

My story starts before I was born. When my mother was pregnant with me, she and my father were about to get a divorce. She was pushed very hard to have an abortion; if she didn't, she knew that she would have to raise us by herself. She said "no" to the abortion. After my father left, we moved to Tennessee. My mother remarried, but my stepfather was abusive. He was really the only father I ever had. It took a lot of years to heal from that. When I was 18, I found myself pregnant, and I married the boy. But the baby was stillborn, and I think that triggered a lot of my childhood pain. I lived with it for many years.

How did you and your husband Daniel meet?

We like to tell everyone that we met in the "Pen." We both worked in this big old prison, in the little town where I grew up. At the time, I was a single mom with twin girls who were about three years old. Dan and I knew each other for two years, and he kept asking me to marry him, and I kept saying "no." Then one day, he had one of my children on his shoulders, and I said, "I appreciate how much you love her because she's my child." He said, "I don't. I love her because she's my child." After that remark, I married him.

But there was a lot of pain in the beginning of our marriage because we weren't living right. I became Catholic after I married Daniel, and we learned a lot going through RCIA together. We slowly decided to follow God, making little daily choices.

You made some big choices, too.

We decided we would be open to life. I mean, you don't plan on having 13 kids. When Dan said he wanted a large family, I was thinking four or five. But it was all the daily choices we made, even when they were hard, that gave us the grace for God to use us in this way. But He had to allow a lot of pain to bring us to that moment.

Tell us about Michael's diagnosis.

When I was pregnant with Michael, we went to get an ultrasound. The doctors called me to tell me the baby was a boy and that he had Down Syndrome. I called Daniel. He said, "That's the most wonderful news I've ever heard in my life." I said, "But I'm going to need someone to help me."

I knew a child with Down Syndrome was going to need a lot of extra care, and I just needed Dan to know that I needed help. He said, "Okay." So I said, "Okay, we can do this."

But when I was almost 20 weeks pregnant, they did an extensive ultrasound. They called us into a room, a really small room that had lots of screens. The doctor was pulling up all these different images. She began to explain to us what fetal hydrops is. She showed us on the ultrasound how there was fluid all through his body, in his lungs, through his skin. Some children they can treat, but when fetal hydrops is connected with a genetic condition, there's nothing they can do about it.

Did the doctor give you any hope?

The doctor said, "I'm sorry, there's nothing we can do. He's going to die." Dan said, "I need a percentage. What's the percentage that he will live?" She said, "I'm sorry, Dan. Zero. I've been doing this a long, long time, and I've never had a baby survive this. It's also important for you to know that Michelle can get what he has (Mirror Syndrome), and she can die. You can

induce now, or you can wait and deliver after the baby dies ... but if Michelle starts getting Mirror Syndrome, we may need to have a very serious conversation."



What did you do?

Dan was so angry at her for telling us to induce, but I never was. I knew that I could die. But I said, "We're going to pray." Dan works for the Knights of Columbus, and it was just a few days before we were supposed to go on an employee pilgrimage to Fatima. Later that night, I was a little hysterical, and I laid down on the floor to cry. That's when Dan prayed to Fr. McGivney, "I don't know what to do. But I know you need a miracle. And if you pray for my son, we'll name him after you."

So, you started calling the baby "Michael"?

Actually, we had a bit of a disagreement. I really wanted to name him after my grandfather Ben, who was called "Lucky." But Dan stood up and said, "He's going to be fine. We're going to Fatima, Fr. McGivney's going to pray for him, and we're going to name him Michael. We're naming him Michael because there's going to be a miracle." For a few minutes I was upset, then I thought, "Well, Fr. McGivney does need a miracle." The next morning, we were emailing our friends: "We're going to be in Fatima on this day, and we're requesting through the intercession of Fr. Michael J. McGivney that the baby be healed." But my friend who helped send the emails out still had a burial gown made for him, just being honest.

What happened on your pilgrimage?

The day we landed in Rome, the Holy Father announced the Year of Mercy. I remember thinking, "Mercy, Lord. Mercy." That day for Mass, our pastor just randomly picked the altar that the Knights of Columbus had refurbished, which had a beautiful icon of Our Lady holding the Baby Jesus. And when we got to Fatima, the Gospel during Mass was the one where Jesus says to the official in Cana who asks Him to heal his son, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will not believe ... You may go; your son will live" (*Jn 4:48;50*). Hearing that verse gave us great hope.

What happened when you returned home?

The doctor had told me, "You're going to be fine ... but it'll probably get pretty serious quick when you return."

I went back to the doctor within a day or two after we flew back. I was terrified. The technician was taking a long time. I saw something white on the baby's lungs, and I started crying. I said, "Is that fluid?" She looked at me and said, "Michelle, this is the prettiest baby I've ever seen in my life."

I said, confused, "I was told there was no hope." The doctor said, "Michelle, didn't you just come back from Fatima? With God there's always hope. There's a little wet spot on his lung, but it's really not a big deal. What's your baby's name?" I said, "Well, there's been a lot of controversy over that in our family, but his name is Michael."

How did you know it was a miracle?

The first doctor called every specialist in hydrops she knew. She was so afraid that she might have made a mistake in telling me to induce. But they all told her, "No, there's no way you made a mistake." I actually had hydrops when he was born. I had Mirror Syndrome. That's part of the miracle. How could Michael not have it, but I did? The doctor came around after he was born and said, "It's been the honor of my life to deliver your baby, your little miracle, your precious baby." And he was born on the anniversary of the charter of the very first chapter of the Knights. And Fr. McGivney and I share a birthday. God was saying over and over again that He meant for this to happen. Fr. McGivney chose us. We were chosen before time; in God's mind, this would happen.

Has this physical healing brought other healing into your life?

I've always been able to say I love Jesus, but I was never able to say that I loved God the Father. I didn't have a father to teach me how to love. It really wasn't until after the miracle when I told someone, "God the Father can never be outdone

in generosity,” that I realized how afraid I had been to love the Father. But now I could see that He knew my story, and He was there with me through it all. He loved me, a Mary Magdalene. I’m not the Virgin Mary. I’m not pure, but He came into my body, into my womb, and performed a miracle inside of me. He loved me fully. That’s what God does — He performs miracles inside of us.

Why do you think Michael wasn’t healed of Down Syndrome?

It never crossed our minds to pray for that. It would be like saying, “God, I don’t want my Bella to have her beautiful voice; I don’t want Leo to have his green eyes.” That’s part of who they are. Who am I to tell God, “I don’t want that gift; give me another one”? He is the Maker of life! My favorite part of it all is that Michael’s story is important *because* he has Down Syndrome, not in spite of it. This was a little wink from God that He approves of how the Knights have carried on Fr. McGivney’s mission by what they have done for the unborn, for the disabled, for the widows and orphans.



How has Michael changed you and your family?

Having a child with special needs is such a gift. It shifts you from turning inward to turning outward. It’s crazy. I went from thinking, “O Lord, You are going to have to help me; I’m already overwhelmed and now I am going to have a baby with special needs!” to thinking, “God, I just want this baby with special needs. Can I have him for a day? Can he live for a month? Can he just live?” And there’s just a love that Michael has that is unadulterated and beautiful. He just loves and teaches you to love. How can you look at Michael and not know that God is real? Yes, he poured a whole gallon of milk on the floor ... but how can you not say “thank you” for a little relic that runs around and says, “Mommy, I love you”? I will spend eternity thanking God for what He has done in our lives. It’s changed everything.

What would you say to families who are struggling?

People think we’re “so holy,” but we’re not a perfect family. We have all the things that happen in a real family in this age. That’s the beauty of the story: God loves us where we are. He loves all of us and has a plan. It was part of the Gospel reading that day at Fatima, after the official’s son was healed, that “his whole household believed” (Jn 4:53). We still have children that are away from the faith, but I have been clinging to that promise. He’s the God of mercy. If we follow God’s plan, He’s going to do great things ... He’s going to write our story. We just have give Him a little tiny bit.



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS:

Founded to protect and care for the needs of widows, orphans, immigrants, and refugees, the Knights of Columbus are a world-wide spiritual organization of Catholic men who seek to build up the Church and help families grow closer to Christ. Deeply committed to the cause of human life, they have been an unfailing support to our lives and our missions, and we thank them from the bottom of our hearts for their incredible generosity and witness. For more information: kofc.org

Fun fact: Beatification is one step on the way to declaring someone a saint. In addition to the evidence of a holy life, one verified miracle occurring after the person’s death is necessary for the Church to declare them “blessed”.

THE TRUE VISION THAT HEALS



YOU ARE CHOSEN YOU ARE A GIFT

by Sr. Zelig Maria Louis, SV

Freedom comes from living in the truth of who we are and who God is (cf. Jn 8:32). Seeking God’s vision of each person, created in His image and likeness, powerfully frees our hearts to love as He loves. By immersing ourselves in the truth of God’s love, we come to see that each person He creates is intentional. No one is a mistake or accident.

Women we’ve served:

Sarah* received an adverse prenatal diagnosis for her baby boy. She listened to the doctor’s long list of things her son would likely not be able to do. When he finished, she paused and asked the one question most on her mother’s heart: “But ... will he be able to play?”

Kelly*, when asked to have test after test done to determine the potential limitations of her baby in the womb, said, “I don’t need any tests. I will love her the same no matter what she can or can’t do.” She lived the truth that the goodness of her daughter’s life was measured by love, not by capabilities.

The simple and profound truth is this: God wills each life not based on what a person can do, but simply because of His love. This is the true vision that heals our eyes and lets them see each human life as God sees. To approach each person with a reverent affirmation of his or her inherent dignity, simply because God delighted to create this person, is to allow the truth to heal us.

* Names changed for anonymity.



HEALING THROUGH FORGIVENESS

An interview with Fr. John Burns

by Sr. Maris Stella, SV and Sr. Fidelity Grace, SV

Fr. John Burns is a priest of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. He studied Business Marketing and worked in commercial fishing off the coast of Australia before realizing the deeper call to become a “fisher of men.” He was ordained to the priesthood in 2010, and completed a doctorate on the theology of healing through forgiveness. He speaks at conferences, preaches missions, and directs retreats throughout the country. He is the author of *Lift Up Your Heart: A 10-Day Personal Retreat with St. Francis de Sales*, and is a retreat director for the Sisters of Life and the Missionaries of Charity.

How have you witnessed people find healing through forgiveness?

I have been amazed and brought to tears in witnessing the power of God’s grace to bring order and to heal what has been wounded by sin. I have walked with people who were stuck in physical, emotional, psychological pain — and even diabolical oppression — until they forgave. I can say with confidence that there is simply no deep healing without some engagement of forgiveness.

How would you define forgiveness?

The idea of forgiveness often intimidates people. It can appear that forgiveness fails to uphold justice, and in other situations,

forgiveness — especially for men — seems like a form of weakness. In cases of severe trauma or deep pain, the idea of confronting one’s offender is terrifying and even imprudent. Forgiveness is first and foremost a matter of the heart. Forgiveness can be achieved even without interaction and reconciliation with one’s offender. This means we are able to forgive those who are deceased or with whom it is impossible or unsafe to communicate. This fact is incredibly hopeful. In terms of a concrete definition, mature and lasting forgiveness entails several components: the choice to let go of the quest for revenge, the emotional release of the demand for repayment, the decision to leave the pursuit of justice to another authority (either God or civil authority), and the pivot from ill-will to good-will, where the one who forgives shifts the posture of his/her heart toward the offender from curse to blessing. When we truly forgive, we share in the gift of Jesus Christ on the Cross as we offer an undeserved gift to one who has hurt us.

What are the most common wounds we experience, and how do they affect us?

The pain we bear in our hearts can be complicated and layered. Our wounds were likely inflicted as a fruit of sin,

and sin is the playground of evil. The evil one sows lies around our wounds that distort the truth about ourselves, about others, and even about God. Dr. Bob Schuchts names seven major wounds: rejection, abandonment, fear, shame, powerlessness, hopelessness, and confusion. These wounds assert an agonizing but often subtle influence over our hearts, as we experience tremendous uncertainty about ourselves and our ability to flourish. We might feel like our hearts are just never going to be whole. We tend to replay the wounding incident over and over again, which leads to resentment — literally a “re-feeling” of the sorrow and anger aroused by the injustice. We might feel broken, dirty, misunderstood, forgotten, ashamed, and enraged all at once. But we want to renounce the lies that have trapped us and replace them with the truth of our identity in Christ Jesus.

What’s the first step in the forgiveness process?

First, we have to take an account of our pain — how we’ve been hurt and who has hurt us. It’s important to honestly recognize and feel our sorrow and resentment (to weep or cry out in anger) rather than deny or suppress our emotions. These emotions are telling us something about what went wrong and, in turn, about our hearts; to avoid them or suppress them amounts to a form of dishonesty. Yet, as helpful and important as our emotions are, we also recognize that they so easily mislead us, and so they must be addressed rationally. We have to look at the people toward whom we feel sorrow, anger, and resentment, and make a decision: do we continue on the road toward which our emotions point, which is toward revenge, or are we willing to choose another way? When we feel stuck, it is helpful to recognize the binding force of unforgiveness. Christ reminds us, “Unless you forgive others your trespasses, your Father will not forgive you yours” (*Mt 6:15*). Unforgiveness, the place out of which we plot revenge and stew in hatred, actually closes our hearts to God’s mercy. And we have to admit that our attempts to live with the anger or to get rid of the resentment on our own terms simply have not worked, but have only intensified our anger.

What do we do after we’ve let ourselves be real with our emotions?

We release our debtors and surrender the administration of justice to God and, if fitting, to another authority. With God’s help, we begin to discover the other person as he or she is before God: broken, in need of healing, and often carrying a long story of pain that we usually cannot see. We can — difficult as it may be — even come to unite our pain to His upon the Cross and offer it for the salvation of the very ones who hurt us. Eventually in prayer, we may place ourselves at the foot of the Cross, with our offenders. We observe the face of Christ who looks upon them with love as He suffers for their salvation. Gradually, we

come to share God’s desire for the well-being and salvation of all persons, even our enemies.

And the final step?

Finally, we can pronounce, in Jesus’ name, words of forgiveness. Over time, with Christ as our model, we can pray for or practice charity towards those who persecute us. This is a divine achievement. It is a pure gift.

What if it doesn’t feel like we have forgiven another?

People often ask this question, and it eludes a catch-all answer because each heart is unique. What can be said universally is that stepping into forgiveness and sharing Christ’s heart in forgiveness is like the emotional solution we never knew we needed. As we forgive, we discover the overly-intense emotions lose their chokehold on the heart. Even if they do not fully disperse, the posture of our heart has shifted and thus evil no longer has such a textured and craggy landscape within which to hide. In forgiveness, we step out of the darkness and into the light, making a moral choice that has real implications — whether they are immediately felt or not. Because we have chosen the way of Jesus Christ, we can make an act of faith that something real has occurred within us. This allows grace to work within us. Eventually, with repetition of the forgiveness process, the emotions do follow.

One of the most common reasons we often don’t feel like we have forgiven is because we unknowingly skip over the structure of our emotions. If we want to forgive someone who has hurt us, we have to forgive them for each of the wounds they have inflicted on us. We have to be conscious of the specific acts done (great and small) and the emotions that follow. This is a process that takes time. It can seem daunting, but if we skip this, the emotions keep us trapped in the insistence for repayment and punishment. The good news here is that each act of forgiveness for each specific injury weakens the power of our inordinate emotions. Choosing forgiveness often requires a repeated renewal of that choice.

How can we find healing for painful memories?

Because God sees past, present, and future in a single glance, He knows how our whole story fits together. The healing of memories amounts to a Divine retelling of our story, through which our recollection (memory) of events comes to align more with God’s perspective of our past.

Even though we might wish parts of our story away, God does not. God sees perfectly well how the places of pain and suffering are filled with potential for mercy and healing love. He purifies our memories in the light of grace to reveal His power, love, and care. Our pain forces us to recognize

I can say with confidence that there is simply no deep healing without some engagement of forgiveness.

our inability to survive on our own. When it is offered to God, we discover, like St. Paul, that in our weakness we are made strong (cf. 2 Cor 12:10).

The process of praying with memories begins by calling on the Holy Spirit, begging the Lord to show us how He sees the events that still cause us such pain. In prayer, when we observe the events of our painful past with God, we learn that God was also there. We discover that the moment of wounding was not a moment of abandonment at all. Rather, it was a moment in which the Lord allowed something that, although painful, would eventually lead us to the deeper knowledge of God's goodness that comes to us in the present as healing. In the end, our pain is either a weapon for Satan or a powerful instrument for the Lord. In the Divine embrace, our pain becomes the pathway to the most profound and beautiful dimensions of God's love.

How do we persevere when we struggle with painful emotions?

Because psychology offers us so much help in the realm of healing, we may risk falling into some form of self-reliance, thinking we can heal ourselves without God. But when our emotions churn wildly and we feel like we've lost control, the most important thing we can do is surrender control and turn our attention to God; we can welcome His presence and the power of His healing gaze. Sacramental grace and contemplation of the truth will always bear more fruit in us than any of our own independent efforts. Also, the most overlooked dimension of healing is the practice of virtue, which brings order to our passions.

How does healing happen, ultimately?

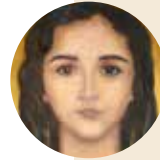
The deepest dimensions of healing are really quite miraculous. We cannot adequately describe how we are made well; we just know it happened. Healing takes place in a secret way, only fully understood to God, and felt intimately by each broken heart. Healing is simply about the restorative power of authentic love that replaces our pain. We are reminded of who we really are — beloved sons and daughters of the Father, who holds us tenderly in His love.

SAINTS OF FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness is hard. But we can ask the Saints to help us because they experienced the same struggles.



St. Stephen, the first martyr, echoed Christ's forgiveness for His persecutors, asking that this sin not be held against those who were stoning him.



St. Maria Goretti appeared in a dream to her attacker, Alessandro, with 14 lilies — one for each stab wound he gave her. Aware of her forgiveness, he radically changed his life and was present at her canonization.



St. Isaac Jogues encouraged his fellow prisoners — later known as the "North American Martyrs" — to offer their sufferings for the conversion of their captors.



St. Ignatius of Loyola walked 100 miles in the winter to nurse a man fallen ill — a man who had, weeks earlier, stolen his paltry savings.



St. Edmund Campion publicly forgave the council that condemned him for celebrating a Catholic Mass (when Roman Catholicism was outlawed in England) and prayed for the queen just before his execution.



St. Teresa of Calcutta placed flowers and prayed at the grave of the Albanian dictator who had refused her entrance into her homeland and visas for her family.

FORGIVENESS IN A NUT SHELL

WHAT FORGIVENESS IS:

1. It is letting go of a debt (something owed to me in justice)
2. It is accepting and living in God's grace of generosity and mercy
3. It is letting Jesus transform hurt into a blessing

WHAT FORGIVENESS IS NOT:

1. It doesn't mean forgetting completely
2. It's not excusing the offender (as if he/she did no wrong)
3. It's not only about feelings
4. It's not denying justice/punishment by authority
5. It doesn't necessarily require interaction (e.g. the person has died)
6. It's not necessarily entering back into relationship (not always safe or possible)



HEALING

(Top left to right)

- *Be Healed*, Dr. Bob Schuchts
- *Unbound*, Neal Lozano
- *Feeling & Healing Your Emotions*, Conrad Baars, M.D.
- *Real Suffering*, Dr. Bob Schuchts
- *Setting Captives Free*, Timothy Gallagher, OMV
- *8 Keys to Forgiveness*, Robert Enright
- *Healing*, Mary Healy
- *Hurting in the Church*, Fr. Thomas Berg
- *Healing the Original Wound*, Benedict Groeschel, CFR
- *Abba's Heart*, Neal Lozano



WE DON'T NEED TO LET OUR WOUNDS SABOTAGE OUR RELATIONSHIPS

We are all triggered by old wounds. But they don't have to sabotage our relationships. If we allow Jesus' Resurrection to be the ultimate word in our lives, we don't have to keep going back to our old hurts or our old patterns of thinking and behaving. Through His transforming love, our dark places of hurt can be healed, and they can actually spring forth fresh streams of mercy and compassion — so that we can choose to love even those people we find most difficult. And sure, we're going to stumble along the way. But keeping our eyes fixed on Him gives us the strength to ask forgiveness from others when we find ourselves acting out of our wounds. This is the path to true freedom. **Our wounds don't have to define us.**

How do we choose to live in our daily lives?



WOUNDS

ABANDONMENT FEAR SHAME POWERLESSNESS REJECTION HOPELESSNESS CONFUSION

Why am I angry?

by Sr. Maeve Nativitas, SV

Let's just say I'm in the workplace and feel like somebody is questioning my judgement, and I experience this immediate defensive anger. I can try to grit my teeth and not be angry, but it's very hard to do that — and, eventually, I won't be able to keep it up. There's actually something deeper that God wants to heal here. This provides an instance for me to be able to reflect: "Why do I feel angry? I feel angry because I feel pain. Why do I feel pain? I feel pain because I perceive this person is thinking I'm not good enough." So there's actually this deep-rooted insecurity that's at the very core.

Calling out the lies. Choosing reality.

Every time I become aware of the thought that I'm not good enough, I can turn to God and say, "How do You see me, Father? Speak truth into my heart." Eventually, over time, this place that was once an occasion for sin now becomes an opportunity for an encounter with Love, an encounter with the truth of my goodness, because it has now led me to look for my goodness in my Father's gaze. Now, I no longer need to protect myself with anger, and, eventually, the pain loses its control over me. I become better able to enter into relationship with others.

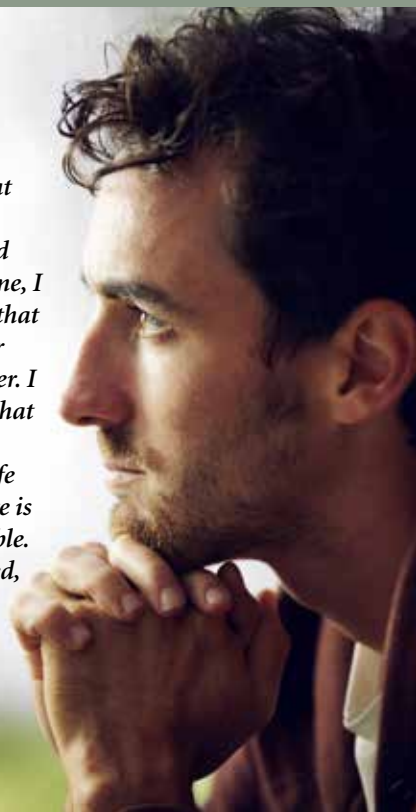
RESPONDING TO MY WOUNDS

Reclaiming truth/rejecting lies

Rejection Wound

I can pray: "In the name of Jesus Christ, I renounce the lie that I am unlovable, not wanted, and not good enough. In Jesus' name, I announce the Truth that I am a beloved son or daughter of the Father. I announce the truth that He loves me so much that Jesus gave His life for me, and that there is no greater love possible. I am loved and valued, wanted and desired, and I am precious in the Father's eyes."

-Dr. Bob Schutchs,
Be Healed



LIVING BEYOND *my wounds*

by Sr. Fidelity Grace, SV



CORRIE TEN BOOM'S STORY:

A Christian family of Dutch watchmakers, the ten Booms harbored Jews in their Amsterdam home during the Nazi persecution — ultimately helping nearly 800 people reach safety. A secret room became “the hiding place” for their guests, until the family was discovered and arrested by the Gestapo in 1944. Corrie and her sister, Betsie, were sent

to the Ravensbrück concentration camp, where they were subject to humiliating medical examinations, grueling 11-hour days of manual labor with scanty rations, and overcrowded living conditions. Clandestine worship services in their bunker with a contraband Bible carried them through. Thanking God for even the fleas that infested their filthy beds, the sisters refused to relinquish their interior freedom and joy, trusting in God’s nearness even amidst the suffering. While disease would claim Betsie’s life in the camp, Corrie was liberated at the end of the war and became a public voice of forgiveness around the world. In her book, *The Hiding Place*, she shares a profound experience after one of her talks in Germany, illustrating how when God “tells us to love our enemies, He gives, along with the command, the love itself.”

CORRIE TEN BOOM [1892–1983]

A PRISONER NO MORE

It was in a church in Munich that I saw him —

a balding, heavysset man in a gray overcoat, a brown felt hat clutched between his hands ... One moment I saw the overcoat and the brown hat; the next, a blue uniform and a visored cap with its skull and crossbones ... the pathetic pile of dresses and shoes in the center of the floor; the shame of walking naked past this man. I could see my sister’s frail form ahead of me ...



From L to R: Nollie, Corrie, Father, Mother, Willem, Betsie

Now he was in front of me, hand thrust out: “A fine message, Fräulein! How good it is to know that, as you say, all our sins are at the bottom of the sea!”

And I, who had spoken so glibly of forgiveness, fumbled in my pocketbook rather than take that hand ... I was face-to-face with one of my captors and my blood seemed to freeze.

“You mentioned Ravensbrück in your talk,” he was saying. “I was a guard there. But since that time, I have become a Christian. I know that God has forgiven me for the cruel things I did there, but I would like to hear it from your lips as well. Fräulein,” again the hand came out, “will you forgive me?”

And still I stood there with the coldness clutching my heart. But forgiveness is not an emotion ... Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart. “Jesus, help me!” I prayed silently. “I can lift my hand ... You supply the feeling.”

And so woodenly, mechanically, I thrust my hand into the one stretched out to me. And as I did, an incredible thing took place. The current started in my shoulder, raced down my arm, sprang into our joined hands. And then this healing warmth seemed to flood my whole being, bringing tears to my eyes. “I forgive you, brother!” I cried. “With all my heart!” For a long moment, we grasped each other’s hands, the former guard and the former prisoner. I had never known God’s love so intensely as I did then.

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HE SPOKE MY NAME



“With each new wound, I became what they called me. How do I explain it, but to say that I began to believe that I was my sin.”

Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white ... They asked her, “Woman, why are you crying?” “They have taken my Lord away,” she said, “and I don’t know where they have put him.” At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus ...

And Jesus said to her, “Mary.”

(Jn 20:11-16)



IMAGINE

A meditation through Mary Magdalene’s eyes

by Sr. Elizabeth Ann, SV

It was early in the morning on the third day since my Lord had died. I could not sleep, but spent the night on my knees, weeping. My body was spent. It was dark. I could barely see beyond all that I mourned. Then, my thoughts went back ... back to the first time we met, and He saved me.

I had been called so many names during those dark and imprisoned years. And with each new name, a new wound appeared in my heart — a wound that bled and bled and only intensified the self-loathing. With each new wound, I became what they called me. How do I explain it, but to say that I began to believe that I was my sin.

“This is who you are,” the voices would taunt me.
“You are filth. You are wretched.” And worst of all,
“You are unlovable.”

But there came that moment when I heard of the Lord, and He found me ... That moment when I wiped and kissed His feet with my hair and my tears.

“Your sins are forgiven ... your faith has saved you.
Go in peace.”

A sense of gratitude and love overcame me. And later, He said my name for the first time. (And thereafter He would say it often.) In that voice filled with everything good and healing, He spoke my name.

From those days forward, I felt seen for the very first time in my life. No, not seen in the way the world saw. Not seen for all my dark choices and impurities, sins and failings, but seen in a way that was healing. He seemed to understand me without words — He knew what brought me joy, what made me cry, what brought laughter, and what moved me. He seemed to see things in me I never knew were there — beautiful, pure things, that somehow made me stop wanting to be someone else. It was as if each time He said my name, He looked deep within me and recognized — dare I say, delighted in — someone He had always known. It was as if we shared some intimate connection. There was this place of belonging within my heart that was a part of Him, too. And it was this place, this space, He desired to restore and bring to life again. This I felt. And each time His voice spoke my name, I think I became more whole, and the wounds in my heart stopped bleeding.



- Epiphanies: Meditations with Scripture
by the Sisters of Life



NATASHA'S Story

After my abortions, I tried doing many things to heal: 12-step programs, acupuncture, and affirmations. Every morning, I would look at myself in the mirror and say affirmations fifteen times, but this didn't make me feel better about myself. I read many self-help books too, but they didn't help me either. Years ago, I had gotten confirmed, but then I had stopped going to church. But sometimes I would go into the Catholic Church nearby and just sit. One afternoon, I found a Sisters of Life *Ocean of Mercy: Healing After Abortion* brochure. I picked it up and was going to use the words "Ocean of Mercy" for the vision board I was making. But my life was so dark that, by God's mercy, I somehow called the number on the brochure instead.

My heart was broken when I called the Sisters. I had tried to fix it, fix my life, but I couldn't. It was too much for me to bear. I knew my abortions were wrong, but I couldn't reconcile them. My broken heart was calling out to Jesus. From the Sisters I received love and compassion. The darkness, shame, self-reliance, and my attitude of thinking that "I can heal on my own" began to melt. I met other women who were on the same journey, and I received love and encouragement from them. The Sisters taught me how to pray. I started going to church again. And about a year later, I went to Confession and confessed my abortions. I felt relief and peace.

My Catholic faith has become a way of life for me now. I have learned that I cannot heal myself. Healing comes from God. It comes from deepening my relationship with Jesus. It comes from the Sacraments of Confession and the Eucharist. Only God can heal my wounds, and I have to persevere on this journey to receive the healing I need.

Name changed for anonymity.



OUR MISSION OF HOPE & HEALING

It can be all too easy to think that mercy is not for me. What if my sins are too much, too big? What if I have done something that seems unforgivable? But the unwavering truth is this: God's infinite mercy awaits me.

In our mission of Hope & Healing to those who have suffered the experience of abortion, we see this truth come to life. Women who have defined themselves by their abortions find that there is something even more deeply defining: the love of God.

The love of God is greater than any, and every, sin. Fear tries to convince us that we will not be received with love if we open the door of our hearts, but God eagerly longs to heal our wounds with His love. Jesus desires to be invited into our darkest places so that He can be with us there, with His redeeming love. His love is greater, higher, wider, and far beyond all our greatest hopes.

If you or someone you know has suffered the experience of abortion, know that you don't need to be alone in this pain anymore. We invite you: open the door to the healing power of Jesus' love, where a fresh beginning of hope and new life awaits.

For more information:
sistersoflife.org/healing-after-abortion/

GOD'S HEALING PRESENCE



God is with me.

Jesus never stops choosing you, laboring for your good, or pouring His life into you. He desires to restore you in His image and likeness, and to bring you into the fullness of your identity as His beloved son or daughter. He loves you personally, and His healing, gentle, merciful heart ever seeks to encounter yours, in and through even the ordinary things of daily life. Some of our Sisters share how God's healing presence can be experienced through prayer, leisure, community life, and the Sacraments.



He re-creates me.

How Jesus heals through prayer

– Sr. Mary Gabriel, SV



"Real healing is given to us through intimacy with Jesus, through receiving His presence in prayer. Jesus and the Blessed Trinity dwell within us at every moment through Baptism. Think of a time when you've been with someone in the car and you're not talking but you know some-

one is in the car with you. Prayer is the awareness of another Person with you, in you: Jesus. The Blessed Sacrament and the Scriptures bring us His presence in a striking way. Start by picking a passage of Scripture. For example, 'My sheep hear my voice. I know them' (Jn 10:27-28). Jesus Himself is saying to you, 'I know you.' Sink into His presence in silence. Often when we're in silence, what will also bubble up are places of pain. Don't be afraid of anything that's in you. Let the broken mess of your humanity rise up before His gaze of love. Tell Him, 'Lord, I'm very angry, and I don't know why'; 'I'm very hurt, and I don't know why.' Jesus does not whitewash our brokenness. Jesus has taken on every bruise in us in His Passion. Every time we have felt scourged, every time we have felt mocked, belittled, rejected ... Jesus has suffered this in us. This isn't magical positive thinking. This is a real Person who is God in the flesh who has taken on all of my wounds, my sin, my darkness. He asks me to give it all over to Him, and He says, 'Come, walk in the light.' Jesus transforms me by bringing me into His own risen life."

How Jesus heals through leisure

– Sr. Maria Kateri, SV



"Through leisure, through recreation, the Lord 're-creates' us. I know I've experienced that. I'll come back from a walk in the snow or a bicycle ride to the lake, and I experience this sense of being re-created ... almost 'put back together again.' We

can experience God's love and how much

He provides for us through beauty, through nature, through time spent with loved ones. I think every time we perceive how much God loves us, this is healing. His love is healing. It touches into the deepest parts of our hearts. There is a temptation to 'work, work, work' or get weighed down by burdens in life, but God just wants us to hand these over to Him. Leisure has a sense of playfulness to it, and we can feel childlike. It's almost as if we're saying to God, 'Okay, You take care of all this. I'm going to go out to play.' I think the Lord delights in that. He doesn't want us to carry everything by ourselves. For someone who hasn't been incorporating leisure into their daily life, start small ... maybe it's 5 or 10 minutes each day. It does take a certain intentionality, but you'll see how life-giving it is. Leisure adds an abundance to life. God has given us this gift of life, and He wants us to cherish it, to live fully alive."

Through others *He heals me.*



We are all like different rocks with edges, tossed around together in a box and smoothing each other out. Through our interactions with others, we discover the places in our hearts that stand in need of healing ... We also come to experience our goodness.

How Jesus heals through the Sacraments

– Sr. Mary Loretta, SV



"Why are the Sacraments so important?

It's God's way of loving us. Let's get to the heart of the matter: we want to be loved; we want to be known; we want joy. Christian joy is the certainty of knowing God's infinite love for you. The Sacraments are real, tangible ways that God loves us by breaking the bonds

of sin so that we can be filled with Him. At

the words, 'I baptize you in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,' I'm a new creation in Jesus Christ. In Confession, God breaks open the chains that weigh us down. I could talk to people; I could read books; I could do all those things, but until I actually hear the words 'I absolve you of your sins,' I still have chains on me. I walk out of Confession, and I'm lighter. I went in like a ton of bricks, and I come out feeling like a feather. Who can do that but God? In the Eucharist, we have been given the gift to actually receive Jesus Christ: Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. When we let Him come in, He heals us from all of the wounds and the baggage we carry. When He gets in there, it's all released. We're letting Him touch those dark parts of our hearts that we've hidden. God wants to pour the balm of His healing on us in the Sacraments. No one else but Jesus can set us free."

How Jesus heals through community

- Sr. Maeve Nativitas, SV



"Community is essential for Christian healing. It's where the whole mystery of love gets worked out. Our founder, Cardinal O'Connor, would talk about how we are all like different rocks with edges, tossed around together in a box and smoothing each other out. Through our interactions with others, we discover

the places in our hearts that stand in need of healing, places of brokenness. We also come to experience our goodness through the love of others in community. It is healing to be loved by others, not because we do anything or because we're of use to them, but just because we exist. I am actually made to need the affirmation of other human persons. Through others and through their unconditional love, I can experience my goodness. It's most powerful when they are able to love me in my brokenness and in my imperfections. This experience of love helps me to be able to love myself — as I am in my brokenness — and to believe that my Father in heaven also loves me. When you're given the freedom to choose who you spend time with, choose people who will really uphold you and who will love you into healing. We are meant to be healed in community. We are not meant to do it by ourselves. God wants to give people to us that we can journey with in healing."

THE SISTERS OF LIFE
Annunciation Motherhouse
38 Montebello Road
Suffern, NY 10901

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IMPRINT

Sr. Marie Veritas, Editor
Sr. Mercy Marie, Copy Editor
Sr. Maris Stella, Writer
Sr. Mary Margaret Hope, Writer
Sr. Lucia Christi, Writer
Sr. Fidelity Grace, Writer
Sr. Zelig Maria Louis, Writer
Sr. Charity, Writer
Sr. Beata Victoria, Writer
Sr. Elizabeth Ann, Design/layout

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publications@sistersoflife.org

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THE MOMENT THAT CHANGED ME

Join us for a new mini video
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they were convicted of the
importance of each human per-
son and the sacredness of life.



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SAINTS OF HEALING



St. Mark Ji Tianxiang,
a 19th-century Chinese Chris-
tian, struggled with an opium
addiction for more than 30
years but persevered in faith,
ultimately dying a martyr.



Servant of God Dorothy Day
suffered an abortion before
her conversion. She became
a vessel of mercy to others,
especially the poor.



St. Giuseppe Moscati was a
physician known for his char-
ity. He counseled other doc-
tors, "You must treat not only
bodies, but also souls."



St. Elizabeth of Portugal
was pained by the infidelity of
her husband. Eventually, God
intervened to bring about his
conversion.



St. Jane Frances de Chantal
battled anxiety and depression
as a result of cruel treatment
from another. Her spiritual
director, St. Francis de Sales,
helped her to freedom and
healing.

Annunciation Motherhouse

(Generalate, Novitiate)
38 Montebello Road, Suffern, NY 10901
845/357-3547

Heart of Jesus Convent

125 Lafayette Avenue, Suffern, NY 10901
845/547-2630

St. Frances de Chantal Convent

(Postulant House, Evangelization)
198 Hollywood Avenue, Bronx, NY 10465
718/863-2264

New York Mission to Pregnant Women

20 Cardinal Hayes Place, New York, NY 10007
Pregnancy help call: 212/737-0221
Toll free: 877/777-1277
Co-workers of Life call: 646/882-1087

Visitation Convent

320 East 66th Street, New York, NY 10065

Philadelphia Mission to Pregnant Women

St. Malachy's Convent
1413 North 11th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19122
267/831-3100

Toronto Mission to Pregnant Women

659 Markham Street, Toronto, ON M6G 2M1 Canada
Pregnancy help call: 416/463-2722

St. Joseph's Convent

172 Leslie Street, Toronto, ON M4M 3C7 Canada

St. Paul the Apostle Convent

586 McLean Avenue, Yonkers, NY, 10705
914/968-8094

Villa Maria Guadalupe

(Retreat House)
159 Sky Meadow Drive, Stamford, CT 06903
203/329-1492

Sacred Heart of Jesus Convent

212/397-1396

St. Clare's Convent and Eucharistic Chapel

3900 13th Street NE, Washington, D.C. 20017
202/635-0931

St. Mary Magdalene Convent

2771 Zenobia Street, Denver, CO 80212
303/658-0409
denver@sistersoflife.org

Hope & Healing After Abortion

(U.S. and worldwide) Toll free: 866/575-0075
hopeandhealing@sistersoflife.org
(Canada) 416/463-2722
toronto@sistersoflife.org