



# Healing & Freedom

“How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the holy Spirit and power. He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.”

Acts 10:38

**Advent Retreat**

**Fr. James Northrop**

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# Reclaiming a Christian Anthropology

- ✱ Salvation involves our entire being. God doesn't just save our intellect.
- ✱ Jesus cares about what is going on in our lives. The Sacraments are wonderful signs of His concern and a means by which He communicates His healing grace.
- ✱ Grace builds on nature. Grace purifies and brings out what is noble.

# Purifying Love

With death, our life-choice becomes definitive—our life stands before the judge. Our choice, which in the course of an entire life takes on a certain shape, can have a variety of forms. There can be people who have totally destroyed their desire for truth and readiness to love, people for whom everything has become a lie, people who have lived for hatred and have suppressed all love within themselves. This is a terrifying thought, but alarming profiles of this type can be seen in certain figures of our own history. In such people all would be beyond remedy and the destruction of good would be irrevocable: this is what we mean by the word Hell. On the other hand there can be people who are utterly pure, completely permeated by God, and thus fully open to their neighbours—people for whom communion with God even now gives direction to their entire being and whose journey towards God only brings to fulfilment what they already are...

# Purifying Love

Yet we know from experience that neither case is normal in human life. For the great majority of people—we may suppose—there remains in the depths of their being an ultimate interior openness to truth, to love, to God. In the concrete choices of life, however, it is covered over by ever new compromises with evil—much filth covers purity, but the thirst for purity remains and it still constantly re-emerges from all that is base and remains present in the soul. What happens to such individuals when they appear before the Judge? Will all the impurity they have amassed through life suddenly cease to matter? What else might occur? Saint Paul, in his First Letter to the Corinthians, gives us an idea of the differing impact of God's judgement according to each person's particular circumstances. He does this using images which in some way try to express the invisible, without it being possible for us to conceptualize these images—simply because we can neither see into the world beyond death nor do we have any experience of it. Paul begins by saying that Christian life is built upon a common foundation: Jesus Christ....

# Purifying Love

If we have stood firm on this foundation and built our life upon it, we know that it cannot be taken away from us even in death. Then Paul continues: “Now if any one builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—each man's work will become manifest; for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work which any man has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire” (1 Cor 3:12-15). In this text, it is in any case evident that our salvation can take different forms, that some of what is built may be burned down, that in order to be saved we personally have to pass through “fire” so as to become fully open to receiving God and able to take our place at the table of the eternal marriage-feast.....

# Purifying Love

Some recent theologians are of the opinion that the fire which both burns and saves is Christ himself, the Judge and Saviour. The encounter with him is the decisive act of judgement. Before his gaze all falsehood melts away. This encounter with him, as it burns us, transforms and frees us, allowing us to become truly ourselves. All that we build during our lives can prove to be mere straw, pure bluster, and it collapses. Yet in the pain of this encounter, when the impurity and sickness of our lives become evident to us, there lies salvation. His gaze, the touch of his heart heals us through an undeniably painful transformation “as through fire”. But it is a blessed pain, in which the holy power of his love sears through us like a flame, enabling us to become totally ourselves and thus totally of God.

# Purifying Love

In this way the inter-relation between justice and grace also becomes clear: the way we live our lives is not immaterial, but our defilement does not stain us for ever if we have at least continued to reach out towards Christ, towards truth and towards love. Indeed, it has already been burned away through Christ's Passion. At the moment of judgement we experience and we absorb the overwhelming power of his love over all the evil in the world and in ourselves. The pain of love becomes our salvation and our joy. It is clear that we cannot calculate the “duration” of this transforming burning in terms of the chronological measurements of this world. The transforming “moment” of this encounter eludes earthly time-reckoning—it is the heart's time, it is the time of “passage” to communion with God in the Body of Christ[39].....

# Grace & Justice

The judgement of God is hope, both because it is justice and because it is grace. If it were merely grace, making all earthly things cease to matter, God would still owe us an answer to the question about justice—the crucial question that we ask of history and of God. If it were merely justice, in the end it could bring only fear to us all. The incarnation of God in Christ has so closely linked the two together—judgement and grace—that justice is firmly established: we all work out our salvation “with fear and trembling” (Phil 2:12). Nevertheless grace allows us all to hope, and to go trustfully to meet the Judge whom we know as our “advocate”, or parakletos (cf. 1 Jn 2:1).

Spe Salvi 45-47

# Healing in the Sacraments

- \* The necessity of “expectant faith”
- \* The role of the faith and docility to the Holy Spirit in helping people understand the healing power of the Sacraments.
- \* Using God’s Word and becoming more comfortable with spontaneous prayer. (Next 2 Slides)
- \* Sharing our own stories of healing. (Dr. Kerry McMahan)

# Scripture

But you, remain faithful to what you have learned and believed, because you know from whom you learned it, and that from infancy you have known (the) sacred scriptures, which are capable of giving you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for refutation, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that one who belongs to God may be competent, equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Indeed, the word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating even between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and able to discern reflections and thoughts of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12)

# Scripture

The Magi then meet with the scholars, the theologians, the experts that know everything about the Sacred Scriptures, who know the possible interpretations, who are able to recite by heart every passage and hence are a precious help to those who wish to follow the way of God. But, Saint Augustine affirms, they love to be guides for others, showing the way, but they do not walk, they remain immobile. For them the Scriptures become a sort of atlas to read with curiosity, an ensemble of words and concepts to examine and to discuss learnedly. But again we can ask ourselves: is there not also in us the temptation to hold the Sacred Scriptures, this very rich and vital treasure for the faith of the Church, more as an object for study and the discussions of specialists, than as the Book that indicates to us the way to reach life? I think that, as I indicated in the apostolic exhortation “*Verbum Domini*,” the profound disposition must always be reborn in us to see the word of the Bible, read in the living Tradition of the Church (No. 18), as the truth that tells us what man is and how he can realize himself fully, the truth that is the way to follow daily, together with others, if we wish to build our existence on a rock and not on sand. **(Pope Benedict XVI - Epiphany Homily 2011)**

# Examples

- ✱ Reconciliation (inner healing from wounds)
- ✱ Surgery
- ✱ Project Rachel

# The Healing Has Begun

Matthew West

You have carried the  
weight of your secret for  
way too long

Thinking if there is a  
place called forgiveness  
you don't belong

Oh, but freedom can  
never be found behind  
those walls

So just let 'em fall  
Just let 'em fall

Oh, the healing has  
begun  
Oh, the healing has  
begun

How long has it been  
since you've felt  
anything but shame

Child, lift up your eyes  
cause mercy remembers  
your name

And those tears you've  
been holding back  
Let 'em fall like rain  
Cause today is the day  
Yeah today is the day

Oh, the healing has  
begun  
Oh, the healing has  
begun  
Oh, the healing has  
begun  
Oh, the healing has  
begun

Hallelujah  
Hallelujah, Yeah  
Hallelujah, Hallelujah

Just lift your eyes  
Lay it down  
What once was lost  
Has now been found

Oh, oh

There's a world full of  
people dying from  
broken hearts  
Holding on to their guilt  
thinking they fell too far

So don't be afraid to  
show them your  
beautiful scars

Cause they're the proof

Yeah, you're the proof