

INSCAPE August 2015

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Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

May you always be consciously aware of the grace and peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the love and mercy of God the Father, and the communion of the Life-Giving Holy Spirit dwelling within your heart!

A HEART HEALED BY DIVINE LOVE

Jesus the Light came into our darkness. He carried within himself the fullness of God's life and wholeness. He came among us to share in his abundant life. "...I have come that they might have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10) [overflowing fullness, amount in excess].

The one great sin for us human beings is to live in the darkness of our own isolated loneliness. We were made for loving union with God and all human beings. But sin forces us to resort to power as the means to move out of our self-absorption and loneliness. We seek by many so-called "sinful" actions to empower ourselves into a proper acceptance by others. Yet pitifully such approaches lead us farther and farther from true love and our true selves as God's manifestation of beauty in this world.

Jesus' redemptive power is one of removing our ignorance (spiritual darkness) by giving us through his Holy Spirit an abiding experience of the heavenly Father's great love as indwelling us as in a mansion, a temple "Jesus answered, saying to him, he who loves me keeps my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make a place of abode with him" (John 14:23). Jesus spoke to those who heard him during his lifetime on earth and he still speaks to us through the Gospel narratives.

But it was not what he said that touched hearts and healed them. It was his loving presence that could touch the sick and the sinful, that could gaze upon them and mirror for them the infinite love of the Father. He stirred up the image of himself locked in each person he met and called him/her into true being. He was the Son of God, and he loved the son and daughter of God in each person he met. "For God so loved the world that he even gave his Only Begotten Son, so that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

JESUS: GOD'S HEALING MERCY AND LOVE

The Good News that God was preparing his people for was the final revelation of his burning love for them. The prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah had foretold the new times when tears would be wiped away and sorrow would be no more. God's revealing Love stood before those suffering and was filled with compassion, seeing how they were held in bondage and sickness: "When Jesus saw the multitudes, he had compassion on them, because they were tired and scattered, like sheep which have no shepherd" (Matthew 9:36).

In Jesus, God forgives all our iniquities and heals all our diseases (Psalm 103:3). God's mercy that is above all his works "The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and of great mercy. The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his servants" (Psalms 145:8-9) becomes incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth. It would be only when he suffers and dies, ignominiously emptied out on the cross, that Jesus would become the living Word of God's healing presence among us...the Holy Spirit of the Risen Lord...in all places and filling all things.

The whole of Jesus' public life was to manifest the tender, merciful love of God for his suffering children, suffering by their own devices. At times Jesus manifested a reticence, to not openly speak freely, to demonstrate his power to heal. At other times he appeals to his miracles and healings as signs of his oneness with the Father. These are not weak vacillations

in Jesus' character or personality. His primary work, his hour, was to become the fullness of God's communicating, loving presence to mankind. He would not be sidetracked by any vain glory as a miracle worker or healer. He was merely the Word spoken by God.

Yet because he was so much one with the Father, seeing the maimed, the blind, the lepers and paralytics, the epileptics and the possessed, the sinners bound by hatred for others, by lust and pride, he, as it were, could not but be compassionate, full of mercy, and loving as his Father is. Throughout his whole public ministry, Jesus' loving concern for his children was in the image of his Father. He knew what forces of evil were seeking to destroy God's people. And wherever he saw the power of darkness covering mankind, he burned with zeal to bring the light of God's love to destroy the effects of sin (division, separation and death).

JESUS THE LIBERATOR

We believe in the power of the Word of God. What Jesus did, as recorded in the Gospel, he continues to do for all who wish to accept him as the God-Man, the Redeemer and Saviour, the healing Lord. Like Lazarus, all of us are bound. And Jesus wishes to unbind us and set us free. He still performs his saving role of freeing us. "You will learn the truth and the truth will make you free.... So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed" (John 8:32).

Jesus literally set the captives free, in fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy (Isaiah 61:1), when he healed the sick and the broken, the diseased or mentally unbalanced, those caught up in selfishness and unlove. Nor does he consider those he healed as healthy only when their sins were forgiven or when their bodies were restored to physical health. Jesus came to give them health holistically on all levels of their being—body, soul and spirit. It was the whole person that Jesus loves and to whom he ministers his life.

FULL HEALING

The full healing for all of us comes only through the illumination of our minds and hearts by the Spirit of Jesus who dies for love of us. When the Son of Man was lifted up, he became a freeing power for all of us from every kind of demonic possession or sickness. Jesus refers to himself on the cross as the serpent that Moses fashioned of bronze and raised on high. Everyone who was bitten by crawling serpents, looking upon the raised serpent of bronze, would be healed and would live (Numbers 21:4-9). "And the Son of Man must be lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him" (John 3:13-15).

In our brokenness, when we are not in God's life, living fully in the likeness of his Son, we are outside God's Kingdom. Just as Jesus preached the Good News that the Kingdom was breaking in upon each person who would receive him as Saviour and Healer, so he touches us in prayer and leads us into the Kingdom relationships with his Father through the Holy Spirit of Love. Jesus still heals all who open themselves to his love, which is the "imaged" love of our very heavenly Father as Jesus teaches: "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you" (John 15:9).

JESUS HEALS

What wonderful consolation to know by his Spirit that both he and the Father have come and made their home within us (John 14:23). This is what the Kingdom of God is all about. God's eternal and perfect love, personalized in the intimate relations of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, touching us in that intercommunication that we call prayer, draws us out of our isolation and impersonal loneliness to enter into the very family of God.

In such moments of prayerful communion with God within us, the power of sin and death is broken. Jesus truly lives and walks into our lives, the same, but now gloriously risen Lord, and performs the same signs announcing the Kingdom of God. "I Am the resurrection. If anyone believes in me, even though he dies he will live, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25-26).

Jesus still asks us: "Do you really believe that I am the imaged love of the Father? Do you believe I can heal you and bring you into full health as I did all those whom I encountered during my earthly life, provided only that they believed in me?" Or perhaps that more fundamental and urgent question is: Are we aware that we are sick and desperately in need of healing? Do we realize we are not living according to our full potential (theosis), the full life that God created us to enjoy and with which to praise and glorify him?

William of Saint-Thierry (+1148) (theologian and mystic, and abbot of the monastery of Saint-Thierry) in the 12th century wrote in his treatise *On the Solitary Life*: "Although in sinning, [human] nature rejected order, and departed from the integrity of its original state; if it turns towards God, it will recover immediately, according to the measure of fear and love it shows him, all it had lost in turning away from him. How agreeable it would be, and in principle how easy, to live according to *nature*, if only our foolishness would allow us to do so. Cure man in his folly, and immediately his nature would be able to look on the things of Nature without fear."

Bernard Joseph Francis Lonergan (1904–1984; Canadian Jesuit priest, philosopher, and theologian) expresses what it means to love God who dwells within us and allows us to transcend our "unnatural" self by discovering our true, transcendent self in God's love: "To be in love is to be in love with someone. To be in love without qualifications or conditions or reservations or limits is to be in love with someone transcendent. When someone transcendent is my beloved, he is in my *heart*, real to me from within me. When that love is the fulfillment of my unrestricted thrust to self-transcendence through intelligence and truth and responsibility, the one that fulfills that thrust must be supreme in intelligence, truth, goodness. Since he chooses to come to me by a gift of love for him, he himself must be love. Since loving him is my transcending myself, it also is a denial of the self to be transcended.

Since loving him means loving attention to him, it is prayer, meditation, and contemplation. Since love of him is fruitful, it overflows into love of all those that he loves or might love. Finally, from an experience of love focused on mystery there wells forth a longing for knowledge, while love itself is a longing for union: so for the lover of the unknown beloved that concept of bliss is knowledge of him and union with him, however they may be achieved."

We were created by God to be whole persons, totally integrated in all body, soul and spirit levels of relationships. We were to find our relationship to the Godly within us insofar as we had a mind, an intellect, and a will, to know and receive God's great love for ourselves. If we, as planned by God in the first Adam and actualized in Jesus, the New Adam, were to live according to our "essential self," according to our true nature, freely consenting to love God in loving service, we would be in harmony within ourselves. We would be in good health also with God and with the whole world around us.

But sin brought death to the "God-Life" in us. We were plunged into a disorientation from God and the world around us. Evil is not an objective entity existing by itself. It is an illusion of what we in sin were never meant to be. It is an unreal condition that we, also, so often assume to be our "natural" self.

Saint Gregory of Nyssa described the condition of a human person living in sin: "The lofty has been brought low: what was made in the image of heaven has been reduced to earth; he who was ordained to rule has been enslaved; what was created for immortality has been destroyed by death...he who was familiar with impassibility has been transformed into a life of passions and death."

BODILY HEALING

All of us can usually detect when we are in need of physical healing. The body is an organic mechanism. Parts deteriorate. Viruses and microorganisms attack and bring infection into the bloodstream. Vitality slows down, as we grow older. Our senses diminish in strength. Our vision and hearing usually grow weaker as we advance beyond middle age. And so our aches and pains cry out for freeing, for healing, for restoration to former strength.

We must believe that God is interested in our bodily health. Jesus came as God's image in human form. He never turned away the blind, the lame, the crippled, the lepers, and the paralytics, but he healed all who believed in his power to set them free from their physical slavery to bodily sickness and disease. "He went around the whole of Galilee teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the Good News of the kingdom and curing all kinds of diseases and sickness among the people. His fame spread throughout Syria, and those who were suffering from diseases and painful complaints of one kind or another, the possessed, epileptics, the paralyzed, were all brought to him, and he cured them" (Matthew 4:23-24; 9:35).

This same Jesus, risen in glory, still brings his healing love to mend our broken bodies. It is not that he sees the body as something distinct from one's soul or spirit. So now, as in his earthly lifetime, Jesus, the image of the loving Father, is filled with love and compassion for all of us not free from sickness and disease of any kind. He sees us as whole persons with very particular bodies.

PHYSICAL HEALING

Yet Jesus, the Divine Physician, knows better than our modern doctors how the body, soul and spirit interact in us. These are not tightly concealed compartments of self-contained entities. About seventy to seventy-five percent of our physical diseases are rooted in psychic suggestions received into the unconscious until the consciousness uses our autonomic system to create the sickness that "acts" out the inner psychic suggestion.

We all have daily experience of the increasing stresses and anxieties that we must live under, and we know how such psychic factors powerfully affect our bodies. High blood pressure, heart condition, ulcers, allergies, arthritis, even stages of cancer development show a direct relationship between a disturbed psyche and certain somatic diseases and illnesses.

Scientists have shown that our minds are capable of producing great electromagnetic energy fields that influence the human, bodily organism as well as other living organisms such as plants and animals. Experiments have been conducted in Yoga, Zen Buddhism, Transcendental Meditation, Silva Mind-Control, hypnosis and biofeedback that have shown conclusively how mental activities can produce great changes in the physiological state.

God has revealed much about the workings of the human psyche through the discoveries made in depth-psychology and psychotherapy. One of Carl Jung's commentators, Dr. Ira Progoff, compares the psyche to a cross-sectional drawing of geologic rock formation. At the top is a thin layer of surface rock that we call *consciousness*. Below this is a thick layer of rock that we call *personal unconscious*. Underlying both of these layers there is a dark, volcanic base extending back to the very core of the earth itself, bringing the individual into primordial contact with all of creation as a part to the whole. This Jung calls the collective unconscious or conscience of the Universal Man. Occasionally out of this volcano there erupt materials that rise to the surface, passing through the other layers.

PSYCHIC BROKENNESS

If we are to attain an integrated personality, to harmonize all the various levels of psychic life within our mind (Jung calls this process “individuation”) the upper layers of the psychic must be harmonized with the lower layers. This means that the lower layers must be opened up to the scrutiny of the consciousness. We will remain crippled psychically and will always be the victim of primordial factors in our life unless we open up these layers to inner healing.

But when we allow ourselves in moments of deep relaxation, inner silence (hesychia), and the peace of transcendent contemplative prayer to go within and see what lies beyond the superficial level of our controlled consciousness, which in fact Carl Jung calls the area of the unconscious, we find an inner psychic world crying out for healing and harmony. Society with its “proper” way that we should act in certain circumstances, not doing some things just because it is not the agreed custom, does help us in this external control. But beneath this “properness,” all too often we find a seething volcano of self-love, autonomy, hatred toward certain individuals, readiness to use violence to get our own way.

The jungle is very much within us underneath the external polish of an educated person. The *Lord of the Flies* (governing ourselves with disastrous results) is experienced by all of us if we have any reflective self-knowledge at all.

FEAR OF FEAR

One of the greatest psychic enslavements is fear. It is the opposite of faith that pours into our spirit as a gift of God’s Spirit of Love. When we lack such a healing experience of God’s personal, indwelling love for us, we lack a sense of true identity. Fear is primarily centered in the apprehension of a future danger, unhappiness, doubt, anxiety, worry, dread, hatred, anger, horror, fright or terror. The thought of an impending evil weighs heavily upon our psyche and our body, crippling our natural growth and maturity, and breaking down our health.

Fear can be about innumerable objects. It is the state of fear from which we must be delivered, for often the objects that we fear are only in our minds. The nation’s number one health problem lies in the area of emotional and mental illnesses. And most of these psychic disturbances are due to needless fear. Most doctors are concerned with bringing a healing to the effects of fear. But we must discover the root of fear that is so often centered in a lack of faith and trust in God’s loving providential care for all of us.

FEAR NOT

Jesus came to reveal to us that we have a loving Father who numbers every hair on our heads. We are not to worry in the light of this great revelation, for if God takes care of the birds of the air and clothes the lilies of the fields, now much more, Jesus insists, will our Father in Heaven take care of all future needs? (God knows what we need, even before we ask, or are aware of such need...vespers Pray of Light). The conclusion is, therefore, “Do not be afraid, O little flock; for your Father is pleased to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32).

We say, “Yes, Lord, I believe,” yet then we begin to fear new areas of the unknown. This disables and impairs us, preventing us from living dynamic, decisive lives because we are stalemated in a no-decision attitude. We experience the non-movement of panic and become spiritually paralyzed. We wait for others to move us into positions where all freedom to make determined decisions out of our true selves is taken away. Or at least we find the field of choices narrowed down by our fearful inactivity. Such slavery removes us (we remove ourselves) from the full life Jesus came to bring us (John 10:10).

We must seek the root causes of fear and then bravely eliminate them by firm, rational action. We become liberated from the bondage of fear when we can look at fear itself in terms, not only of our own strength but, above all, the strength and merciful loving power of God. If fear has come from our own consciousness or unconscious, it will be dissolved by pouring into those psychic areas the healing power of God's personalized, uncreated energies of love dwelling actively within our heart at the core of our being. By God's Spirit we will see God's vision of reality that will dispel the projections of the insecure false ego.

But the central question is: "Are we ready and willing to let go of these fears that allow us an enslaving 'comfort' and security instead of pushing into the dark world of deeper faith?" To let go of such fears is a true dying process that many of us are not quite ready to make. That is to say, many of us prefer living in the cave of fearful shadows brought about by self-centered projections instead of surrendering affectionately in childlike faith and trust to the Indwelling Trinity.

HEALING OF THE SPIRIT

In 1930 Carl Jung wrote a statement that loses nothing of its force and truth for the many years that have passed since then: "During the past 30 years, people from all the civilized countries of the earth have consulted me,...Among my patients in the second half of life—that is to say, over thirty-five, there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life. It is safe to say that every one of them fell ill because he had lost that which the living religions of every age have given to their followers, and none of them has been really healed who has not regained this religious outlook."

How can we become liberated from our own projections and the world we have been so busy creating in order to live in what we consider the "really real world," that God never had a part in creating? How can we enter into the radical healing of our intimate relationships with God, neighbor, and the entire, material cosmos around us? We have already pointed out the need for inner silence, for constant vigilance over every thought and over our imagination to bring such under "captivity and in obedience to Jesus Christ" as Saint Paul writes (2 Corinthians 10:5). We need to look at ourselves though the illumination of the Holy Spirit on all levels of our brokenness and disunity away from living at the center of the core of our being in Christ.

We need, again through the power of the Holy Spirit, to have a healthy disgust for ourselves, a nostalgia such as the prodigal son experienced as he fed the swine and pondered his separation from his loving father (Luke 15:11). Then we will experience tears of true repentance pouring out, like soft rain falling on the hard earth to soften it. The shell around our false world splits, and God's penetrating love filters into our hearts to stir into new life the great potential lying there...divinization of our entire being.

Dr. Karlfried Graf Durckheim describes this new consciousness: "Freed from his small ego—releases from pride, from the desire to dominate, the fear of pain, the longing for security—he becomes firmly anchored in his true centre. Thus centred, he is able to be receptive to the forces of Being which, with or without his awareness, transform, support, shape and protect him while at the same time enabling him to reveal these forces to the world by the quality of his work, his ability to create and his capacity for love."

Such healing must be an ongoing process of continually meeting the Triune God's love in prayerful communion at the center or core of our being, discovered in the True-Being-God Trinity. What has developed over so many years of self-centered living—as though the world revolved around ourselves—cannot be healed in one moment. It is only God's love, experienced as unconditional, outpoured self-giving through Jesus Christ in his Spirit, the divine uncreated energies touching us in the context of our daily, historical experiences and

calling us into divine filiation of our true self in his divine Sonship, that alone truly heals.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE HEART

Durckheim gives us three stages that develop this process of our heart-transformation into a oneness with Christ, offering us the possibility to discover also in ever increasing awareness of our “otherness,” our unique true selfhood in the very oneness with the Word (Logos) made flesh.

1. All that is contrary to essential being must be relinquished.
2. That which has been relinquished must be dissolved in the Ground of Being which absorbs, redeems, transforms and recreates.
3. The newly formed core arises out of the Ground of Being must be recognized, accepted, allowed to grow and personal responsibility for it undertaken.

We have already developed the first stage, namely, relinquishing the brokenness and negativity of the false self within us. Now we turn to stage two by examining how to pray in the heart—where we experience the personalized Ground of Being as the core and center of our essential self in transcendent prayer. This becomes the state of our experiencing the transformation and recreating of our true self.

HEALING PRAYER-EXERCISE

Here are some steps that you can take to enter into a prayerful inner healing of body, soul and spirit.

- Select a quiet place, free from noise and interruptions. The best time is in early morning before the activities of the day, before sleep in the evening, or if you should wake in the middle of the night.

- Choose a position that is comfortable, yet disciplined enough to prevent sleep or undue distractions to arise. This can be sitting on a cushion on the floor or on a straight chair in front of an Icon of the Holy Trinity.

- Localize yourself in the presence of the Holy Trinity with faithful adoration and praise.

- Begin to breathe consciously. Feel your breath entering into your lungs and slowly follow its exhalation. Synchronize your inhalation and exhalation with the opposite movement of your diaphragm. Lengthen your breathing into calm, long breaths. Feel yourself literally relaxing.

- Descend, by any technique that is meaningful and yields the best results (Fruits of the Holy Spirit), into the depths of your heart, the deeper layers of your consciousness beyond words and images where you are meeting God, as the Ground of Being.

- The most important part of this healing exercise consists in the deep faith that you exercise in the presence of Jesus Christ, the Divine Physician, who is still healing anyone broken, who calls out to him in faith, trust, and love. “I tell you therefore: everything you ask and pray for, believe that you have it already, and it will be yours” (Mark 10:24).

- The first element in such healing, be it on the physical, psychic, or spiritual level, consists in having a forgiving merciful-heart toward others who may have injured or hurt you in any way. Feel a oneness as the love of God’s Spirit unites you with that person or persons in forgiving love.

- The important and final step in such meditation for healing is this: Picture Jesus, in great expectation, from the depths of your heart touching that area of your body, soul, or spirit that needs healing. This may concern a relationship with a person not present. See yourself already healed and living in a new-found joyful love toward that person and all others. Begin to thank God for such healing. Know it is already being done as you believe.

- Leave such a meditation with a spirit of humble thanksgiving, knowing that God has truly answered your prayer. You are healed! Thank God all that day for such a healing. Act on the conviction that God has heard your prayer and is progressively healing you, even if there is not instant manifestation.

May God's grace, through this month's *Inscape* prepare us for next month's topic of "Praying in the Heart."

Father John Michael Zboyovski