

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Jesus speaks to us today what many have called His “Mission Statement”:

**The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring glad tidings to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.** (Luke 4:18-19, cf. Isaiah 61:1-2)

He says that this is fulfilled “today.” In the subsequent texts from Luke, we then see Jesus doing these things. This is not just for 2000 years ago, though; this is for *today*.

Do we believe that God is still working in our midst today? Many of us (maybe most of us) believe that God can do this, that He is powerful enough to bring these healings and do these miracles, but since we rarely see them, sometimes we might begin to think that maybe God just doesn’t want to do them for us today. I want to dispel this myth. God is not someone who used to love the human race, and has decided not to reach out with His loving hand anymore. He did not do miracles for the people of Israel 2000 years ago (and not today) because they were worthy of them. Nor has God somehow become impotent today. God is still powerful. God still loves us. God longs to pour His love on us, not because we are worthy (for we are not), but only *because He loves us!*

I can truly say that I have seen miracles in my life. God has used me, at times, as an instrument through which these miracles happen. In my early priesthood, I prayed over a woman struggling with alcoholism. She was not able to overcome this addiction by herself, but after being prayed over at a Healing Mass, she was freed from that addiction. Every once in a while I still see her, and she has told me (many years later), she has never had a drink again. Recently, I was reminded of a distressed grandmother who had come to me because her newborn granddaughter had heart problems and had to have open-heart surgery. Two days before the operation, I baptized the baby and anointed her with the Sacrament of the Sick. When she went for pre-op, the doctor saw that the condition had disappeared, and the baby no longer needed surgery. That little baby is now in first grade.

You see, God is still moving powerfully in the world. We can come up with all sorts of reasons why people are not healed more often – some have to do with God’s will, some have to do with our lack of faith or openness. We can’t know all the reasons why God miraculously heals one person, used medicine to heal another, and why a third is not healed. What I will say is that I think God would heal *more* people if we asked with faith. Sometimes all that is needed is to ask, and *expect* God to do something.

At the root of all this is the basic truth that God *does* love us. He wants your best good, my best good. Ultimately, that greatest good is heaven – being with God forever. He wants us to experience His love and His joy. He is not a miser, but a Father, a Lover. He *wants* to pour our abundant blessings on His children!

May we be open to hearing the incredible glad tidings of Jesus! May we be open to His love. May we ask for healing for ourselves and our loved ones with expectation – the expectation of a son or daughter who knows the love of the Father and trusts Him to give the good things we ask for!