

Scripture reading:

Mark 1: 29-39

**As soon as they left the synagogue,
they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.
Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever,
and they told him about her at once.
He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up.
Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them.
That evening, at sunset, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons.
And the whole city was gathered around the door.**

**And he cured many who were sick with various disease,
and cast out many demons;
and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.**

MEDITATION

**The estimates are that between 4-6million people visit the shrine of Lourdes
in France with the hope of being cured...**

**Some sources say as high as 10 million people come yearly...
25,000 pilgrims a day.**

**Since 1858..when the visions first began
there have been 69 verified miraculous cures.**

**On one hand you could say: what! only 69 out of the millions who have journey there...
but on the other hand you might say: WOW! 69 people have received a miraculous cure
from whatever was troubling them.....**

On one hand, you could say:

but what about the all the others who weren't cured?

Why not?

On the other hand you could say:

what happened to those who were cured:

why them?

Valid questions I would say...and I will tell you that I do not have answer for them...

But I can tell you that theologians are quick to point out the difference between being cured and being healed.

A cure is the physical resolution of disease.

It may or may not also include a healing.

A healing restores a person's social network,

it helps a person find new meaning and purpose in their lives.

and healing is ALWAYS possible whether or not a person experience's a physical cure.

In our reading today we hear of many cures,

but we hear most specifically of the healing of Peter's mother-in-law.

Peter's mother-in-law was not only cured, but she was also healed....

While some modern feminists might gripe that she goes un named and that she immediately returns to serving the men of the household...

We would do well to remember that in her day and time, running the household well,

offering hospitality to those who enter her door is where she and the other women of her time often found their purpose and their importance.

So let those issues not distract us....

**In our medical system today we most often concentrate on curing an individual.
and rightly so!**

**We do want the cancer to be eliminated,
the arthritis to disappear,
the tumor to be gone...
but being cured does not necessarily lead to a fulfilling life...**

**People may be physically healthy,
but emotionally and spiritually they are lost and alone.
They may feel that their lives are without joy,
without purpose.**

**And there are others who have not been cured,
but are still able to find life full of love and joy...**

**A few weeks back we reflected upon the idea that Jesus wasn't interested in starting a new
religion or getting people to follow the rules
or even renewing order into society...**

**But he was passionate about helping people to not only to understand the immense
importance of being in relationship with others and with God...
but to reap the benefits of those relationships...**

**He was passionate about moving beyond the boundaries and labels and categories that
divide us and
he was passionate about making visible the love and the compassion that binds us...
that makes us brother and sister and kin to each other....**

The Kingdom of God has come near!

Can you see it?

Can you feel it?

Don't get me wrong: I do not discount miraculous cures.

I do believe they happen.

But if that is the only thing that will make us happy.

If being physically cured is the only result we are willing to accept,

then EVEN IF it does happen,

we very well could find ourselves right back where we started from

in the same life we had before with all of our issues and all of our struggles...

and if the cure doesn't happen,

well...then more than likely we will end of feeling even worse than before.

But if our deep desire is to be healed... you can always count on that.

Here at The Center as you know,

we help men who are struggling with addiction.

One of our guiding principles is that we will

“love you until you can love yourself.”

Love is what heals a person...whether they are physically cured or not.

When a man comes here physically depleted from his addiction,

we offer him a chance at sobriety.

But we offer him even more...

we offer him a program to reconnect him with his Higher Power

and if at all possible with those relationships that are most important to him.

Not every family is ready to reconnect...

**Not every man wants to reconnect,
but living without some sense of belonging and community
is a very dry and lonely way to live.**

Jesus gave his life because he believed that Love permeates the Universe....

**A Life lived in and through Love is so much richer,
so much fuller, so much more full of joy than a Life lived
by oneself and for oneself**

**Yes, the Gospels tell us that Jesus cured many people!
Yeah! good for them...**

**but even more importantly was the fact
is that everyone who was open to his love was healed...
They were brought back into the relationships that were most important to them..
they were brought back into their communities and their friendships
and their life had meaning and purpose again...**

**To all those people traveling to Lourdes, we pray for their cure...
and we give thanks for their healing...**

**But to be honest we don't have to travel anywhere to be healed...
we only have to open our hearts
and accept the Love that is already here....right here, right now.
and then we begin to experience the miracle of healing!
and then our lives become richer and more beautiful...
and we find ourselves surrounded by those we love:
friends, family and all of creation...
whether we are cured of our physical illness or not...**

for that we can say, Thank you!! amen.