

Today we come together as people in need. Some of us are hurting; some are injured; some are preparing for surgery; some are seriously ill. None of us asked to be sick, suffering or in pain. Yet, that is our condition.

As we gather for the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, we turn to the Divine Physician and beg for healing. Not only that, we seek peace from fear, worry and anxiety. We ask for strength amid doubt, uncertainty and difficult odds. We ask for trust during an unpredictable time.

In celebrating the Anointing of the Sick, we are reassured of God's unconditional love. God loves us. God wants us well. God wants us healed. We hand ourselves over to the One who gave us life, who sustains us and who supports us through good times and bad, in sickness and in health.

My brothers and sisters, you who are to be anointed are not alone. We, in this community, are praying for you. We are praying for your healing. You can be assured of our prayers in the days, weeks and months ahead. Healing is a work of the Spirit. It is that Spirit to whom we now pray as we celebrate our faith in this precious Sacrament.

Today the 1st Reading and Gospel address a matter that both inspires, challenges & pains us. We hear of an ideal to pursue: the indissolubility of marriage. We marry & it is forever. Marriage is till death do us part. The forever of marriage is a longing, desire, hope & promise for all who marry. All who marry want the marriage to be lifelong. They do what they can to turn that promise into a reality.

At the same time, we know from our own experience, families, and friendships that not all marriages achieve the ideal of the indissolubility of marriage. There is divorce. For some it is shattering, devastating, a betrayal. For others it is embarrassing, shameful, a huge disappointment. For still others, divorce is a relief. It is the conclusion of a nightmare or the end of an agonizing ordeal. Whatever the situation, divorce means hurt, suffering & loss.

So, what can we do? We can pray for, encourage & support people who are preparing to marry, people who are married and people who are struggling in their marriage. We can also pray for, relate with & accept people who are divorcing, people who are divorced.

We do not judge anyone. It is not ours to judge.

And most of all, we can be sensitive, kind & thoughtful to children....of married couples, of divorcing couples, and of divorced couples. In all instances, children feel powerless regarding the strength or weakness of their parents' relationship.

The GOOD NEWS is: God is always with us....whether we are marrying or married, whether we are divorcing or divorced. If this is true of God, we can do no less with one another.