



ESSENTIAL HEALING PRAYERS  
FOR PEACE AND STRENGTH

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Written and compiled by  
Mary Leonora Wilson, FSP



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*Is anyone among you suffering? He should pray. Is anyone in good spirits? He should sing praise. Is anyone among you sick? He should summon the presbyters of the church, and they should pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith will save the sick person, and the Lord will raise him up. If he has committed any sins, he will be forgiven.*

*James 5:13–15*



# Introduction

## *Just to Touch His Cloak*

The evangelists tell the story of a woman afflicted with hemorrhages for twelve years.<sup>1</sup> Reading the account, you can't help but feel the frustration of a woman who has tried everything: all the medical possibilities available to her, all the remedies offered in good advice, but everything to no avail. The evangelist Mark says that she only grew worse, left impoverished and in mental anguish. Due to her illness, she also found herself unaccepted in most circles of society. She has literally no options left—until Jesus enters her life.

She had heard about Jesus of Nazareth, whom many thought to be the Messiah. Hearing that he was in the village, faith was kindled in her heart; she began to hope again. So, quietly, but with determination, she “came up behind him in the

crowd and touched his cloak. She said, 'If I but touch his clothes, I shall be cured.' Immediately her flow of blood dried up. She felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction. Jesus, aware at once that power had gone out from him, turned around in the crowd and asked, 'Who has touched my clothes?' But his disciples said to him, 'You see how the crowd is pressing upon you, and yet you ask, 'Who touched me?' And he looked around to see who had done it. The woman, realizing what had happened to her, approached, fearful and trembling. She fell down before Jesus and told him the whole truth. He said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace and be cured of your affliction'" (Mk 5:27-34).

Most of us need healing on some level or another—healing of body, mind, or heart; of memories; of past or present wounds; of emotions, anxiety, fear; and of unhealthy or sinful habits. Jesus is the Divine Physician. He has the power to heal and the will to heal. A leper who approached him recognized this and said to him,

“If you will, you can make me clean.” Jesus replied, “I do will it. Be made clean” (see Mt 8:3).

Faith does not exempt us from taking care of ourselves or of going to the doctor when necessary. On the contrary, it’s part of the package. Living faith means being good stewards of all the gifts God has given us, and one of these is our health. However, there are times when the Lord lets us be visited by sickness for a greater good, or to draw us closer to him, to increase our faith and to experience his healing love and care. For some people, illness may actually be part of their vocation to holiness.

Prayers for healing are not some magical formulas for wellness. No. They are prayers that direct us to the loving providence of God and open us up to the healing action of the Holy Spirit. This may not always take the form that we expect it to, but as we pray and grow through suffering, we will feel the intervention of the Lord in our life and discover his healing love. May this be so for each of us.





# Psalms for Healing and Coping

The Psalms give voice to the perennial prayers of the people of God. The Psalter was the prayer book of the Jewish people and of Jesus; it remains the prayer book of the Church. Here we find prayers of petition and of praise, of thanksgiving and lament. Below you will find psalms that address the themes of illness, healing, and trust.

## Psalm 6

*Prayer for Recovery from Grave Illness*

O Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger,  
or discipline me in your wrath.  
Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am  
languishing;

O Lord, heal me, for my bones are  
shaking with terror.  
My soul also is struck with terror,  
while you, O Lord—how long?  
Turn, O Lord, save my life;  
deliver me for the sake of your  
steadfast love.  
For in death there is no remembrance  
of you;  
in Sheol who can give you praise?  
I am weary with my moaning;  
every night I flood my bed with tears;  
I drench my couch with my weeping.  
My eyes waste away because of grief;  
they grow weak because of all my foes.  
Depart from me, all you workers of evil,  
for the Lord has heard the sound of  
my weeping.  
The Lord has heard my supplication;  
the Lord accepts my prayer.  
All my enemies shall be ashamed and struck  
with terror;  
they shall turn back, and in a moment  
be put to shame.

## Psalm 23

### *The Divine Shepherd*

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green

pastures;

he leads me beside still waters;

he restores my soul.

He leads me in right paths

for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest  
valley,

I fear no evil;

for you are with me;

your rod and your staff—

they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me

in the presence of my enemies

you anoint my head with oil;

my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me

all the days of my life,

and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord

my whole life long.

## Psalm 27

### *Prayer of Confidence*

The Lord is my light and my salvation;  
whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the stronghold of my life;  
of whom shall I be afraid?

When evildoers assail me  
to devour my flesh—  
my adversaries and foes—  
they shall stumble and fall.

Though an army encamp against me,  
my heart shall not fear;  
though war rise up against me,  
yet I will be confident.

One thing I asked of the Lord,  
that will I seek after:  
to live in the house of the Lord  
all the days of my life,  
to behold the beauty of the Lord,  
and to inquire in his temple.  
For he will hide me in his shelter  
in the day of trouble;

he will conceal me under the cover of  
his tent;  
he will set me high on a rock.  
Now my head is lifted up  
above my enemies all around me,  
and I will offer in his tent  
sacrifices with shouts of joy;  
I will sing and make melody to the Lord.  
Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud,  
be gracious to me and answer me!  
“Come,” my heart says, “seek his face!”  
Your face, Lord, do I seek.  
Do not hide your face from me.  
Do not turn your servant away in anger,  
you who have been my help.  
Do not cast me off, do not forsake me,  
O God of my salvation!  
If my father and mother forsake me,  
the Lord will take me up.  
Teach me your way, O Lord,  
and lead me on a level path  
because of my enemies.  
Do not give me up to the will of my  
adversaries,

for false witnesses have risen against me,  
and they are breathing out violence.  
I believe that I shall see the goodness of the  
Lord  
in the land of the living.  
Wait for the Lord;  
be strong, and let your heart take courage;  
wait for the Lord!

## Psalm 38

### *A Penitent Sufferer's Plea for Healing*

O Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger,  
or discipline me in your wrath.  
For your arrows have sunk into me,  
and your hand has come down on me.  
There is no soundness in my flesh  
because of your indignation;  
there is no health in my bones  
because of my sin.  
For my iniquities have gone over my head;  
they weigh like a burden too heavy for  
me.  
My wounds grow foul and fester

because of my foolishness;  
I am utterly bowed down and prostrate;  
all day long I go around mourning.  
For my loins are filled with burning,  
and there is no soundness in my flesh.  
I am utterly spent and crushed;  
I groan because of the tumult of my  
heart.  
O Lord, all my longing is known to you;  
my sighing is not hidden from you.  
My heart throbs, my strength fails me;  
as for the light of my eyes—it also has  
gone from me.  
My friends and companions stand aloof  
from my affliction,  
and my neighbors stand far off.  
Those who seek my life lay their snares;  
those who seek to hurt me speak of  
ruin,  
and meditate treachery all day long.  
But I am like the deaf, I do not hear;  
like the mute, who cannot speak.  
Truly, I am like one who does not hear,  
and in whose mouth is no retort.

But it is for you, O Lord, that I wait;  
it is you, O Lord my God, who will  
answer.

For I pray, "Only do not let them rejoice  
over me,  
those who boast against me when my  
foot slips."

For I am ready to fall,  
and my pain is ever with me.

I confess my iniquity;  
I am sorry for my sin.

Those who are my foes without cause are  
mighty,  
and many are those who hate me  
wrongfully.

Those who render me evil for good  
are my adversaries because I follow  
after good.

Do not forsake me, O Lord;  
O my God, do not be far from me;  
make haste to help me,  
O Lord, my salvation.



## Psalm 41

*Assurance of God's Help and a Plea for Healing*

Happy are those who consider the poor;  
the Lord delivers them in the day  
of trouble.

The Lord protects them and keeps them  
alive;  
they are called happy in the land.  
You do not give them up to the will of  
their enemies.

The Lord sustains them on their sickbed;  
in their illness you heal all their  
infirmities.

As for me, I said, "O Lord, be gracious  
to me;  
heal me, for I have sinned against you."  
My enemies wonder in malice  
when I will die, and my name perish.  
And when they come to see me, they utter  
empty words,  
while their hearts gather mischief;  
when they go out, they tell it abroad.

All who hate me whisper together about me;  
they imagine the worst for me.

They think that a deadly thing has fastened  
on me,  
that I will not rise again from where I  
lie.

Even my bosom friend in whom I trusted,  
who ate of my bread, has lifted the  
heel against me.

But you, O Lord, be gracious to me,  
and raise me up, that I may repay them.

By this I know that you are pleased with me;  
because my enemy has not triumphed  
over me.

But you have upheld me because of my  
integrity,  
and set me in your presence forever.

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,  
from everlasting to everlasting.

Amen and Amen.