

SEPTEMBER 9 2024 FATHER PETER TURRONE

My brothers and sisters,

In today's Gospel, Jesus is being attacked by those around him because He does good on the Sabbath. So, what exactly is the Sabbath? Why do we have it? Well, when we put all the pieces together from Scripture, we find that the Sabbath was instituted by God. He calls us to convoke His people so that we can come to rest in His presence and worship Him.

We can see this in the Old Testament, and we obviously see it in the New Testament as well. Jesus, out of His love for us as God incarnate, wants us to experience healing. As Christians, we understand that on our Sabbath, which is Sunday, we represent the Lord in the celebration of the Mass. At every Mass, we represent the Last Supper, the crucifixion on the cross, and the resurrection of Christ. All these events are made present each time the Mass is celebrated, bringing great joy to all of us.

We are called by God to participate, to offer our lives, and to receive the gifts that He wants to give us. Jesus tells us in other parts of the Gospel that the Sabbath was made for people, not people for the Sabbath. This is a divine gift for our own benefit.

When Jesus heals the man with the withered hand, He is not trying to provoke those around Him; rather, He is teaching them that the Sabbath was made for people. We were created by God to experience His healing.

I want to take a moment to discuss how the Lord heals us at Mass. One way is through physical healing. There is a beautiful book written by Father John Hampsch called **The Healing Power of the Eucharist**. This book contains inspiring stories of how receiving the Eucharist—Holy Communion—can have a positive impact on someone's physical health.

For example, there was a story of a woman suffering from cancer, who was in despair. She prayed, telling the Lord, "Thy will be done. But if you want, I trust that you will heal me." She understood that, unlike the woman who touched Jesus' cloak and was healed, she would receive Christ fully in the Eucharist, and He could heal her as well. And that is exactly what happened; she received great healing.

I have encountered many similar stories within different parishes. People with various physical illnesses have felt the healing presence of Christ. One common experience they share is a sense of warmth—a sign of God's presence. This feeling goes beyond the physical; it reverberates within our souls, reflecting the beautiful grace that God offers us.

In addition to physical healing, there is another type of healing that occurs. The Eucharist consists of two parts: the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. We know that Jesus speaks to us during Mass, offering words of comfort and consolation, as well as challenges. The Lord seeks to heal us on a psychological or emotional level.

How many of us have experienced anxiety or doubt? Perhaps we wonder whether God is hearing us or question why certain things are happening in our lives or in the world. At times, it can feel overwhelming.

However, when we return to Scripture and listen attentively to God's word, we hear Him speaking to us.

Jesus wants us to experience His peace. He repeatedly tells us throughout Scripture, "Peace be with you." These words are not just for those who lived thousands of years ago; they are for us here and now. What a beautiful gift!

Jesus heals us on a psychological and emotional level, and even His presence in the Eucharist allows us to experience healing. We can find healing for our memories, especially for those who have experienced traumatic events in the past. Many people I have ministered to have told me that by attending Mass regularly, even apart from Sundays, and spending time in adoration, they experience transformations within themselves. Wounds may not disappear entirely, but they can learn to see life from a different perspective—an eternal perspective.

When we receive the Lord in the Eucharist with an open heart, everything changes. We can experience healing on multiple levels—physical, emotional, and spiritual—as well as clarity about our personal vocation and purpose within the church community.

In the Eucharist, we are gifted with an incredible opportunity to worship God. The Lord wants to give us every grace and every fruit of the Eucharist. There is a beautiful prayer written by Saint Thomas Aquinas that we priests can choose among different prayers. We ask the Lord, "May I not only offer the Eucharist and receive you, but also receive the effects of your power." We are truly blessed to encounter Jesus in such a profound way.

It is essential, especially in these times, to understand the importance of the Mass. Many people face difficulties and cannot physically attend, but we offer the Mass even through the television, grateful for the opportunity to unite in prayer. God's grace transcends all barriers.

Reflecting on the Mass, I remember how, as a child, I was told it was a day of obligation. While that is true, we must also recognize that it is a beautiful encounter. The Sabbath was created for us; God loves us deeply and knows our spiritual hunger. He gives us the Sabbath as a means to receive tremendous grace.

As we consider the Mass and our perspective on it, let us remember that God loves us so much that He laid down His life for us on the cross. He promises that those who follow Him will receive an experience of eternal life even in this world. Hence, there is a profound desire to go to Mass—to thank God for His blessings and to seek grace to praise Him with our lives.

Let us continue to pray for each one of you. This Mass is being offered for you, and we pray daily for your needs. May God grant you every source of healing, whether physical, psychological, emotional, or spiritual, so that you too can glorify Him in your own lives.