

HEALING OF MEMORIES

*This Healing Prayer Exercise is based on an article appeared in the Review for Religious, No. 32 (1973) by F. Martin "The Healing of Memories"
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INTRODUCTION

The process of healing painful memories goes through two stages.

The first stage is: 'AWARENESS'

Opening the wounded areas and exposes them to the light and healing of the love of God.

The second stage is: 'FORGIVENESS'

Forgiving, both, of the person or persons who inflicted the wounds on us as well as of ourselves

The Prayer Healing Process Can Be Done In Two Ways:

First way: Through Personal Prayer:

- Simply and directly we pray to the Lord in faith, trust and perseverance to heal us from our painful memories,
- It may happen, as we pray, that we re-experience strong emotions like, anger, hatred, rancor, etc towards the person/s that hurt us.
- If this happens, stop for a while and gently take that person/s, in your imagination, to your heart and quietly make your mind to give up those resentments - (*avoid inner violence*) - and pray to God for both of you; (*for you, and for the one who hurt you*) keep saying: **"Lord Jesus, have mercy on us both!"**

Second way: Through Shared Prayer:

- No man is an island. We are inter-dependent, both in our human and in our spiritual life. Some times, it helps to pray with someone else and share with him/them your feelings in order to experience inner healing.
- As you share your feelings and hurts with another person – *not the one who offended you* - and pray together, you may, more easily, discover in you some personal attitudes and prejudices, that make healing and your union with God rather difficult, such as resentments, selfishness, pride, self-rejection, etc.
- The person with whom you share your feelings and hurts, inspired by God, even unsuspected, may utter such touching and enlightening words that may hasten your healing.
- Sometimes, the Lord heals during prayer without bringing, at that moment, your wounds to consciousness. So, don't force your memories. Merely, be willing to acknowledge to yourself anything hurtful that may surface to your consciousness as you pray.

PROCEDURE FOR THE HEALING PROCESS AT PRAYER.

For the Healing Prayer Process - whether is done through personal prayer or through shared prayer - follow these steps.

1. Quiet down. Relaxation and/or awareness exercises may help.
2. Opening prayer and a hymn to the Holy Spirit.
3. Reading: Mt. 4/23-24 (*Jesus' power of healing*) followed by a prayer reaffirming your faith in Jesus, your Healer, and Savior
4. Prepare the area of the wound, by remembering God's love for you expressed in former positive specific experiences, events, and persons.
5. Pick out one wound that still hurts. (*Don't dig*). Look at it carefully. Recall it and relive it. Feel the pain. Realize the significance of the person who caused it, may be, your parent, friend, companion or superior. Acknowledge the hurt.
6. Shift gently your attention to the Lord, present within your heart, or in the Blessed Sacrament, or the Crucifix or in whatever way you prefer to imagine Him.
7. Take your wound to Jesus. See Him, compassionately, watching you, fully accepting you and your feelings. Express to Him your longing to experience his healing touch. Avoid 'whys', 'whats' and 'wherefores'.
8. Go back to the painful memory of your hurt and your wound. Again, recall it and relive it. How do you feel now?
9. Spend some time going back and forth, from the wound to the Lord, and from the Lord to the wound.. Slowly, gently.
10. Pray sincerely for the grace:
 - To forgive totally and from your heart.
 - To understand how that person did what he/she did. *Was he/she aware of what he/she did? Was he/she purposely intending to hurt you in the way he /she did it?*
 - To realize how much you can learn and gained out of that painful event.

Closure:

- Can you now, by God's grace, forgive both the other person and yourself totally and from your heart?
- Are you now ready to make up and build bridges between the offender and yourself? If so, what? Be specific
- End with a thanksgiving prayer and a hymn.