



Journey to Joy!  
Healing for Life's Sorrows  
Part 3: "Primal Suffering: The Mother Wound and Father Wound"

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**Theme:** God wants to heal the emotional and psychological damage caused by a mother wound or a father wound.

**Grace:** I pray for the grace to be vulnerable and receptive to God's love and healing  
**Prayer:** to mend the negative effects of a mother or father wound.

Hail Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy,  
my life, my sweetness, and my hope.

To thee do we cry poor banished children of Eve.

To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears.

Turn, then, most gracious advocate,  
Thine eyes of mercy toward us.

And after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary

Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God

That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Amen.

## Praying with Sacred Scripture Every Day

Using the acronym for “Pray” from the Study Material for Part 1, recollect yourself for your time of prayer. Jesus has been expecting you. Come to Him with expectant faith, eager to see what He has in mind for you to receive during your time together. Open the ears of your heart and the recesses of your soul to His sweet intimations, instruction, and love. As you read the Scripture passage, use your journal to write down the words that speak to you, to record your thoughts and inspirations, and to recollect any memories that may well up in you. This is a holy time, a time set apart for the divine action of God to work within you. Rest in the Lord under the protective mantle of Our Lady.

### Daily Passages for Meditation:

Day 1: 1 Corinthians 10:13

Day 2: 2 Corinthians 12:8-9

Day 3: Romans 8:28

Day 4: Isaiah 53:3-5

Day 5: Isaiah 43:18-21

Day 6: 2 Corinthians 5:17

Day 7: Revelation 21:5

## Going Deeper

In our time together this week, we heard from several experts about the importance of our early relationship with our parents or our primary caregivers. Following are quotations from them that were given in the presentation. Read the quotations carefully and reflectively. Then prayerfully answer the question(s) following each. Note your response in your journal and what you think the Holy Spirit is revealing to you.

**Dr. Stanley Greenspan:** "Among the seven irreducible needs of a child is consistent, nurturing relationships with the same caregivers ... early in life and throughout childhood ... they are cornerstones of both emotional and intellectual competence..."

- To what extent were your parents available to you both physically and emotionally? In what way and to what extent has this impacted you?

**Dr. Dan Siegel:** Speaking about the mother's loving gaze toward her baby, he said "Repeated tens of thousands of times in the child's life, these small moments of mutual rapport [serve to] transmit the best part of our humanity -our capacity for love - from one generation to the next..."

- When you picture your mother looking at you, what expression does she wear? Is it positive or negative? Ask God to enter into those memories whether joyful or sorrowful to help you move forward in your own sense of self-worth, dignity, and esteem.
- How might your mother's circumstance and relationship with her mother affected her ability to mother you - both positively and negatively?

**Mark Matousek:** "The mother's eyes are the refuge where children confirm their existence. You learn the world from your mother's face.... Through the mirrored love in our parents' eyes, we learn surrender, devotion, and trust."

- As a wee child and throughout your childhood, adolescence, and adult life, to what extent would you consider your mother's eyes to be a place of refuge for you? What emotions well up in you as you consider this? Write them down and discuss them with Our Lord in your time of prayer.
- Do you have difficulty with surrender? With devotion to God and others? With trust of God and others? Invite the Lord into those areas of deficit and ask Him to begin a process of restoration and renewal in you.

## Help from the Saints

Many of the saints had wonderful, holy parents who led them to sanctity and holiness of life. Saints Louis and Zele Martin, the parents of St. Therese of Lisieux, stand as examples. But, for other saints, their parental relationships were painful experiences marked by varieties of abuse. Blessed Margaret of Castello is one such saint. Read the short biography of her life below.

### Blessed Margaret of Castello (1287-1320)

Little Margaret was born into a noble family near Florence Italy in 1287. The first and only child of her wealthy parents, hers should have been the life of a princess, but her tiny body would never fit that lovely picture. In addition to being blind, she was born with severe deformities including dwarfism and a hunched back caused by a severe curvature of the spine. In addition, she was blind and lame. Horribly ashamed of their offspring, her parents hid her for the first six years of her life, then had a special cell built onto a woodland chapel where Margaret was imprisoned for the next 9 years.

But all was not lost. Her father permitted the family chaplain to visit her so she was able to learn about God, attend Mass and receive the Sacraments, which caused her soul to blossom into a beauty her twisted body could never achieve. After nearly a decade of imprisonment, her parents took her to a nearby shrine to pray for a cure. When none occurred, they abandoned her there. Thankfully, several kind women had pity on the little waif. They took her in, fed her and sheltered her in their humble homes. Soon Her gentle and holy ways won her friends and before long, she was considered to be a blessing to the village.

Margaret eventually entered a local convent where she sought safe haven. However, the religious sisters were lax in their vocation and their rule of life. Margaret's intense faith, devotional fervor, and love of God soon caused them no small amount of consternation. Their hatred for her grew so strong, they expelled her from the convent.

It was after this that she took up residence in the town where the townsfolk resumed caring for her. To thank them for their kindness, she opened a small school for the children of the town where she instructed them in the faith and the Psalms, which she had learned during her time with the nuns. Additionally, she aided the townsfolk by caring for the town's children when their parents went to work. Despite her many miseries, Margaret was always serene, cheerful and courageous. She was never bitter, never complained, never reproached others or lost heart.

After coming under the guidance of the Dominican friars who settled in the town, she became a Dominican tertiary in Castello where she lived an exemplary life of prayer, penance and charity. She received the Dominican habit and wore it for the rest of her life.

## Help from the Saints Continued

Margaret died at the age of 33. She had become so loved by the townsfolk that the crowds at her funeral demanded she be buried inside the church. The parish priest resisted, but when a disabled girl was cured just by touching her coffin, he relented.

Over time, her coffin as well as her clothing rotted. Amazingly, however, her remains had not! God saw so much beauty in His beloved daughter that He chose to preserve her deformed body for all time. The local bishop ordered that a new coffin be made and inspected her remains because the cause for her beatification was in progress. Margaret measured four feet long. She was of a thin figure and her head was disproportionately large. Her forehead was broad, her face tapered to the chin, and her nose was prominent. Her teeth were small and even and her hands and feet were small. Her right leg was an inch and a half shorter than her left. The remains of Blessed Margaret of Castello lay incorrupt under the main altar in St. Dominic Church in Castello, Italy.

- As we have learned, the three wounds of the heart common to everyone are betrayal, abandonment, and rejection. When they come from our parents, they strike deeply into our heart with lasting effect. How did Blessed Margaret experience all three - from her parents and others?
- What sustained her and what virtues did she exhibit?
- Compose a prayer to her asking for her holy help to heal from the betrayal, abandonment, and rejection you have experienced from your parents or from others.

## Words to Grow By

**Analogous** - *Corresponding to some others in particulars, such as a computer is analogous to the brain.*

- Recalling this week's presentation, how is man analogous to God?

**Empathy** - *The capacity or ability to imagine oneself in someone else's situation, experiencing their emotions, their thoughts, their perceptions.*

- In light of this definition, why is empathy necessary for true compassion? What do you think is the connection between empathy and our capacity to be an image of God? Why is it necessary for a well-ordered life? For a just and moral society?

## In Closing

### A Prayer for Healing Of the Mother Wound and Father Wound

*(Adapted from The Forgiveness Prayer written by Father Robert de Grandis, SSJ)*

Dear God,

*Help me to heal from all of the ways I suffer from  
wounds of the heart caused by my mother.*

*Help me to forgive her for all of the times she hurt me,  
Resented me, was angry with me, and punished me.*

*Help me to forgive her for the times she preferred my siblings to me.*

*For the times she told me I was dumb, ugly, stupid,  
the worst of the children.*

*For the times she told me I was unwanted, an accident,  
a mistake or not what she expected.*

*Help me, too, to heal from all of the ways I suffer from  
wounds of the heart caused by my father.*

*Help me to forgive him for any non-support,  
any lack of love, affection or attention.*

*For any lack of time, for not giving me his companionship,  
for telling me I would never amount to anything.*

*For his drinking, his gambling, his arguing and  
fighting with my mother or my siblings.*

*For his severe punishments, for desertion,  
for being away from home, for divorcing my mother,  
for running around on her.*

*Help me to forgive anyone else in my life who has  
betrayed me, abandoned me, rejected me.*

*What the enemy intended for my destruction, O God,  
use for my eternal salvation.*

Amen