News
Vatican
Francis, the comic strip



Pope Francis delivers the homily as he celebrates morning Mass in the chapel of the Domus Sanctae Marthae at the Vatican Jan. 17, 2020. (CNS/Vatican Media)

Cindy Wooden

View Author Profile

Catholic News Service

View Author Profile

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

Vatican City — January 17, 2020
Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

Jesus healed people of all sorts of physical ailments, but he always started with the essential — forgiving their sins, Pope Francis said.

"We should take good care of our bodies, but also our souls," the pope said Jan. 17, preaching about the Gospel of Mark's account of Jesus healing the paralytic.

"Jesus teaches us to go to what is essential," the pope said at morning Mass in the chapel of the Domus Sanctae Marthae. "What is essential is health, complete, body and soul."

Just like a person who is sick tries to find the right doctor to cure that ailment, he said, when a person's spiritual health is in danger, "we go to that physician who can heal us, who can forgive our sins. Jesus came for this reason; he gave his life for this."

In the day's reading from the Gospel of St. Mark, a paralytic is hoping for physical healing, the pope said. But Jesus says to him, "Child, your sins are forgiven."

Only later does he tell the man to get up and walk.

"Physical healing is a gift, physical health is a gift that we must safeguard," the pope said. "But the Lord teaches us that we must safeguard the health of our hearts — our spiritual health — as well."

And, he said, the first step to any kind of healing is recognizing that one is unwell.

Simply saying, "Yes, yes, we are all sinners," isn't enough, the pope said. That just "waters down" the serious consequences of sin and the need for healing. "Today Jesus says to each of us, 'I want to forgive your sins.'"

Advertisement