Do you remember the first time you realized that God actually heals today? That thrilling moment when you could identify with the paralytic or the woman who touched the tip of Jesus’ garment? That miraculous event which challenged the validity of the theory: “That was then; this is now”?

Through the power of the Holy Spirit and at the pleasure of God, Jesus still heals today exactly as he said he would: “Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.” (John 14:12-13, NIV)

Yes, Jesus continues to heal today through his imperfect disciples like you and me. We may not see an immediate cure (Waiting for the Full Ear of Corn, Sharing, July/August 2012) but in my experience he always heals, bringing peace and hope to a frightened soul. When we lay hands on someone and pray, something always happens in a way that is unique to the individual asking for prayer. It is important to remember our stories and even more important to tell them, especially the ones that changed the course of our lives way back when, lest we become complacent with the gifts God has given us. This is one of my stories.

It was 1995, and after more than three years of MRI’s, injections, pills and literally crawling into physical therapy sessions which brought little relief, my husband Roger agreed to have back surgery. Three years? Why so long? Well, you see, Roger has an aversion to hospitals, needles, blood, even taking out splinters. He cringed when I told him I had ordered contact lenses! But on this occasion his back and leg pain finally outweighed his fear.

Two days before surgery, we were invited to our friend Susan’s house for dinner. Early in the evening Roger spoke of his apprehension, and our host responded, “You need to meet Nigel; he was supposed to be here tonight; but he’s praying with somebody.” She added with a hint of skepticism, “Apparently, when he prays people are healed!” Of course, the Nigel she was talking about is OSL Board Member Fr. Nigel Mumford. Before seven o’clock the next morning, the phone rang. In response to a sleepy “hello,” a voice said, “Good morning, this is Nigel Mumford; sorry to call so early, but I received an urgent message from Susan last night to call you. Do you know anything about this?”

“Oh, dear! We had no idea she asked you to call us; but since you did, we’d love to meet you. My husband is having surgery tomorrow, and at dinner last night Susan said that you needed to pray for him. Perhaps you...
can tell us more?” “I’m on my way to work and have no time today or tonight, but if you like, I can come over right now.”

“Have you had breakfast? Roger’s from England as well and he taught me how to make a proper pot of tea.” “Brilliant! I’m on my way.” And with that we hung up.

“Quick, Roger, get up!”

“What in the world is going on?” “I have no idea, but Nigel’s on his way and will be here any minute.”

Wonderful things happened that morning while talking over a cup of tea and toast with marmalade from Marks & Spencer. While Roger and I had always known it was God who brought us together and Christ was the glue in our marriage, we had no experience with miraculous cures except what we had seen on television. You know what I mean: the kind of program where a preacher smacked someone on the head and seemingly pushed him into the arms of a catcher after yelling, “Heal!” Surely they were paid well for the charade. At least that’s how it appeared to us skeptics. But this was different.

After getting acquainted, Nigel shared the story about his sister Julie’s miraculous cure in England and how he discovered that he had received the gift of healing upon his return to the United States. Canon Jim Glennon’s prayer for Julie was brief and gentle with only the lightest of touch when he laid hands on her. It was a beautiful picture and calm came over us when he laid hands on her. It was a beautiful picture and calm came over us when

He had no idea where that thought came from; but later all was revealed.

During the pre-op procedures which required a blood test, the first miracle was confirmed: Roger’s fear was gone. He was completely at peace and watched as the needle went into his arm and blood was drawn. Later he complimented the nurse who installed the IV, and as I watched him being wheeled into the operating room, peace prevailed with shouts of “Love you; see you later!” as if he were going to work. It was then that I knew in my heart that Roger and the doctor would be standing on holy ground with the Great Physician directing the surgery.

Later I learned the anesthesiologist warned Roger that, because of the way his neck was formed, he would have a very sore throat due to the tube they would insert and remove while he was asleep. However when Roger awoke in the recovery room, there was no throat soreness. In fact, he felt as if he had been napping. No grogginess, no pain! He looked at the clock on the wall and asked a nurse, “Is that the right time?” Nigel’s prophesy came true: rapid healing, at least of his sore throat.

After Roger was moved to his hospital room, I arrived and he greeted me by kicking his legs in excitement. I gasped and urged him not to move. He said, “It’s okay. I’m healed and I’ve already been up and to the bathroom on my own.” I was speechless and my heart filled with joy and gratitude. Even so, the doctor said he would be in the hospital for a couple of days.

In the same room was another surgery patient – a young man, John, whose parents were visiting him. Their son’s operation was much earlier that morning, and he was still asleep. John’s mother explained that he would be in the hospital for five days; clearly, his surgery was much more invasive than Roger’s. He had been in a train wreck and they had to take bone from his hip to repair his neck which had been damaged in the accident.

After his parents and I left for the evening, John began to stir. Hearing this, Roger introduced himself and they began to talk through the curtain that separated their beds. In the course of their conversation, Roger told John about Nigel’s gift of healing, something he would never have done before; and at that moment the phone rang. It was Nigel calling from the lobby asking for permission for an after-hours visit. I love God’s timing! After saying a prayer of thanksgiving for how well things went – no sore throat and all – Roger introduced Nigel to the man in the next bed. John told Nigel what had happened to him and accepted Nigel’s offer to pray for
his healing, too. Are you ready for what happened?

At nine o’clock the next morning Roger called to ask me to come directly to the hospital after my Bible study class. Both he and John, the man in the next bed, were being released that very morning. This was a miracle! I wept for joy and couldn’t wait to see them. When I went to Bible study the opening hymn began with “We are standing on Holy Ground,” and I sang through my tears.

Roger began taking walks within the first week he was home and we thanked God with each step. As we walked we were finally able to verbalize the fears God had suppressed prior to surgery. If anything had gone wrong there was a possibility that he might never walk again, which meant he could never play the organ again, or at least never use the pedals. But God gave us peace and new opportunities not only to witness to His healing power but for Roger to use his gift of music to bring glory to God.

As for John, he and Roger kept in touch by phone for weeks to track each other’s recovery. To round out his story we discovered he had left a comment like that, what else can we do but explain how to have faith. Faith is a gift. If a person has previously made the choice not to believe, they can equally make the choice to believe by simply reaching out and accepting the free gift of faith.”

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