

Memoirs of a Christian Healer chronicles the miraculous works of God. You will experience the joy of victory and the sorrow of human weakness. Incorporated within the many stories the Abbot includes reflective lessons on the Healing Ministry. The many stories are of real people and genuine healings.

Memoirs of a Christian Healer

Real Life Stories Genuine Healings

by Abbot Oscar Joseph, O.C.C.O.

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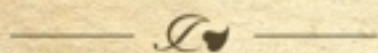
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MEMOIRS
of a
Christian
Healer

Real Life Stories



Genuine Healings

Abbot Oscar Joseph, O.C.C.O.

Divine Healer

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Chapter 1

The Beginning of the Divine Healer

Over the roar of the jet engines I heard, “You don’t have to hold the plane up.” My perhaps all too quick response was, “Who says that I am not.”

I was more than fearful of flying. It was my custom upon take off to hold my hands palm up and pray like crazy. It gave me some assurance that all would be well.

It gave my seatmate the assurance that I was a strange one indeed.

Although an unusual opening conversation between two anxious strangers we did exchange the usual on the plane discussion. Where are you going, where did you come from, and finally what kind of work do you do? Men believe that what you do is who you are. He asked me what kind of work that I did and without thinking I said, “I am a divine healer.”

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Fortunately that opened yet more conversation. Eventually he told me about his lower back ailment that he had suffered for many years. I listened silently. Again, without thinking but feeling moved by God, I asked him if his grandmother had given him a small brown and white bear when he was a child. He said, "Yes," and began to cry. He still grieved the loss of his grandmother. Again, without thinking, I said, she wants you to know that she loves you. He cried some more.

We were quiet for awhile. I asked him if he would like his back to be healed. He was eager and asked if he should kneel in the aisle. I said, "No, let's just pray quietly." Later when he walked to the restroom his back was healed, he no longer had pain. He was so joyful when he had returned to his seat.

Later I reflected that although I had been in the healing ministry for years, I had never labeled myself as a divine healer. I am still not comfortable with that title, but if God gave it to me then I am glad to give Him such honor as to retain that title.

And so begins this memoir. I want you, dear reader, to relive with me a four year period of my ministry with the rural poor in Central New York. Those were particularly exciting years filled with miracles and adventures.

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My purpose is to give glory and gratitude to God for His mercy to me and the people whom He led me to heal.

Having said, “Led me to heal,” I never mean that I myself am the healer. I say the prayers, and God answers, often with a healing but always with His blessings. I am, however, aware that I am merely a freewill instrument who cooperates, often sacrificially, with God’s will. So please remember that when I say “I healed” it should be clear that it is God who heals, and I am only an instrument.

Often before I gave an invitation to pray, my opening line was, “Would you like to pray about that?” I often asked God what He would like me to do. Only once did He not want me to pray. While I was curious about the no answer, I soon learned that the young woman in that case was not yet ready for such a spiritual engagement. God was even merciful to those who were not yet ready.

Often I would hear God, not with actual audible words, but in my spirit, either by being moved, or actual words for me to speak. God frequently gave me instructions as to the type and content of my prayer and where to place my hands. I would try to clear my mind, be still, and be without a personal agenda or goal, simply to be a willing instrument.

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When God had a specific message I did not say such things as “God says,” but rather, “I have something to say and I am speaking on behalf of God”.

Often I could see an emotional block, a specific illness, or an area of the body that needed healing. Frequently I would ask the individual what they would like me to pray for, and I simply would repeat it in a prayerful manner. I have learned that having the individual pray is often more moving than my own prayers. Mostly I would try to get out of the way and pray quietly. It was common for me to quietly pray in tongues. I always remembered that prayer moments are about the individual encountering a loving God and not about me.

I pray that these memories give glory to God and that you might also be inspired and encouraged in your own life. We all carry something or many things that need healing. I would also like to encourage you to pray with others for their needs particularly their physical needs. God hears all of our prayers whether we are particularly gifted or not.

I am also certain that I am a terrible sinner and have not earned or deserved anything. Everything I have is a gracious gift from God. I do frequently repent and amend my life through His grace. As a

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human being I am not particularly special. What I do have that is special shows up when He graces me.

I am certain that my healing and other gifts come directly from the Holy Spirit not from myself or some other New Age energy and certainly not from the evil one.

I will narrate many specific events, and when appropriate I will use actual names and places. I will reserve giving actual names in other cases in an effort to honor and thank the specific individual. When I use the actual name of person or place I will place an asterisk behind the name the first time that it appears. Otherwise I am telling true stores but with fictitious names to protect the identity of a specific individual or place.

It is impossible to name the large number of supporters, mentors, and friends who encouraged me during those years. Certainly perpetual thanks and gratitude go to my immediate family.

During this period I was a lay person in the Roman Catholic Church. Although I was often called pastor, preacher, preacher man, hey you, Mike, and Michael Rivest by those whom I served I was not an ordained person nor did I pretend to be.

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Before we begin it would be helpful to tell you some things about myself prior to my entering into the healing ministry.

The purpose of my edited story is not to speak so much about myself but rather of God pursuing me and sustaining me. I imagine that my story is somewhat similar to yours. While some of the details I hope are not yours: the pilgrimage of falling and standing up, falling down and once again standing up is familiar to everyone.

It was a cold snowy winter's morning on Friday the thirteenth when my mom was in the hospital attempting to give birth. The protocols in the nineteen forties were no babies arrive until the doctor showed up. Well they pushed me back inside dear mom. I suspect they heard me cry, "Really, are you serious?"

Well finally I escaped like super baby screaming "get out of my way." Pretty much "get out of my way" continued as my life's theme from that point until today, particularly when it comes to doing God's will or protecting those under my care.

In my early years I had a bout with cancer. My refuge was falling asleep in my father's weary arms after his long day at work.

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For an introvert going to school was difficult. No one recognized that my dyslexia was running the show. Consequently I presented as though I had some weird disability. I was skinny with a butch haircut and wore braces. All that made me a perfect target for being bullied, beaten, and left on the ground. My sister Karen* tells a story of me running home for safety and of her beating back my aggressors with a broom.

I was sexually abused by an adolescent male “friend” and a female adult.

I spent hours every day “hiding” in our basement listening to music and reading books.

I knew that my youthful readings on psychology and theology were a preparation for helping others.

My parents sent me to Cranwell Preparatory School,* a Jesuit boarding school, hoping that I would receive more academic attention.

In an effort to be macho man I tried out for the football team. I got heat stroke and vomited. That was end of macho man.

Living in a dorm room with nine other boys was a nightmare. I read a lot of spiritual books and hid out the best I could.

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Sophomore year was a coming out of sorts. I became quite the cross-country runner and later the captain of that team and the track team. Chick Pyle* was my only roommate for the remaining three years. Although we were the exact opposites he inspired me to be more confident and outgoing. Father Phillip McKenna, S.J.* encouraged me through the usual ups and downs of my teen years.

Cranwell developed an enormous amount of training in discipline and admiration for the priesthood.

During our 50th high school reunion my former classmates recalled and praised me for my high school leadership style.

At eighteen I entered a Roman Catholic seminary. What an adventure in preparation for Mr. “get out of my way.” Fourteenth century monasticism, Gregorian chant, studying English, Spanish, Latin, Greek, and chemistry all at the same time was very challenging. Later I attended another seminary that was more contemporary. I had acquired a rather good foundation, and I have many funny stories to tell but not here.

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I left the seminary in my junior year and transferred to LeMoyne College* in Syracuse*, New York.

In 1969 I published my first book, was the first in my class to obtain employment, and got married on graduation day. We moved to Buffalo*. The very first evening I saw two teenagers enter our front porch and break our picture window. Naturally I chased after them. Naturally I tripped over an unseen wire fence and rolled bloodied in the middle of the street. Welcome to Buffalo. Cock roaches on the toothbrushes and rats in the basement were our unwanted companions.

I taught three years in Buffalo. Never did I have a supportive administration. Often I, my family, and personal property were threatened. Teaching was a nightmare.

While I was teaching I attended Canisius College*. I had many exciting academic experiences including teaching graduate English class on Existential Poetry, even though I only had a Bachelor's degree at that time. By 1972 I earned my Master's degree in Education with a major in English Literature.

I later went into direct sales. I won't mention the companies because they were incredibly abusive. While I did well during those twelve years it didn't

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mean that I made a lot of money. I used my teaching skills to advance in the industry. That was nice but meant traveling away from home weeks at a time. I was exhausted and stressed. I developed rheumatic fever. It affected my muscles and bones.

I was home bound for months. I had to crawl up the stairs. I could not hold a pen and was fearful that I would never be able to work again. My family was heroic, but it took a toll on us all.

From that awful place of emotional and financial bankruptcy God graciously moved us to a better understanding and appreciation of His love and mercy.

I moved slowly into the healing ministry.

In 1984 I founded New Creation Rural Ministries* which served the rural poor in Central New York with food, clothing, spiritual, and medical care. Often we would refer those we served to government agencies and to local churches

That was a rather exciting time. I had experienced my first mystical prayer, infusion of knowledge, and reception of a wide variety of spiritual gifts. God was so gracious not only towards me but also towards the poor whom I served.

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There were miracles every day everywhere.

News spread of the wonderworker up north. There were numerous magazine and newspaper articles about me. A local university produced a television special. People around the world were asking for my prayers, and strangers from nowhere appeared at my door.

The evil one hated me. But I was too naïve to realize the consequences.

Years later when I returned home from doing healing services in North Carolina, Satan greeted me at my front door. He had taken away all the people whom I loved. I was devastated. The following years of ministry were filled with grief and clinical depression. My comfort was prayer, much of which was rather mystical.

God had fired up my “get out of the way.” Despite my emotional weakness, my world was filled with miracles, healings, and with more on the road healing services along the east coast.

In The Beginning, The Infusion

Puzzles drive me crazy. Every time that I try to put all the pieces together I have to start all over again. The journey from one piece to all of the pieces is frustrating. But finally, when the last piece is positioned the journey rings with joy. The sense of accomplishment far outweighs the pain of the journey. Life is somewhat like a puzzle. You know there is a direction, but the journey is filled with confusion and uncertainty. False starts abound.

I will try to describe the final piece of the puzzle that begins my healing ministry.

We were living in Fair Haven NY,* a small town on Lake Ontario. New Creation Rural Ministries was recently birthed. I was still emotionally recouping from rheumatic fever and had begun my studies for the Catholic Permanent Diaconate.

The Holy Spirit was pushing hard. For several months I focused my studies on Life in The Spirit. Memories of my Uncle Conrad's* exciting efforts in the Catholic Charismatic Movement in Chicopee MA* in the 1960s kept flooding my mind. He too had applied for studies in the Permanent

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Deaconate. When the Bishop's discernment board interviewed his wife and she said that God speaks to her she was labeled crazy, and consequently he was not allowed in the program.

Mostly everyone who dares to say that God speaks to them is labeled as crazy at one time or another.

Let me say ever so loudly, God does speak to me.

I wanted to be filled with the Holy Spirit and to live a Spirit filled life. I wanted to speak in tongues so badly that I read book after book about the gifts of the Holy Spirit. I knew that tongues were the least important of the gifts. I didn't care.

Not all of the readings were theologically solid, and I was sometimes misled. I tried to get into an emotional state so the tongues would come out. I prostrated myself before the altar at church. Nothing worked.

One day I drove our van to the far corner of Fair Haven State Park* onto a cliff that overlooked Lake Ontario*. An author of a somewhat crazy Holy Spirit book said he had told God that he would not speak again until he had received the gift of tongues. I thought that I would do the same.

Sitting in the van, looking over the beautiful lake I arrogantly said, "God I will not talk until you give

me tongues.” Fortunately I could not hear Him laughing.

Moments later it happened. I began to speak in tongues. I dared not stop lest I wouldn't be able to start up again. I wondered if the gift of tongues would work outside of the van. I stepped out and was still speaking. I got back in the van. I am not sure just how long I prayed in tongues. It was amazing.

The beginning happened. My entire life flashed before me. The puzzle came together. There was no condemnation. God was showing me the events that got me to this very place. He had directed my life. God infused all of my gifts. I knew for sure that I was to heal the sick and free those in bondage (Isaiah 61). I knew that I had been given the gift of healing. Other gifts would be revealed.

By the time I got home dinner was on the table. I told the family about my experience and began speaking in tongues. They were very excited. I asked them if they would like tongues as well. The youngest, Heather*, simply prayed, “I want what daddy has.” Immediately she started speaking in tongues. A little later Jennifer*, our middle child, prayed and immediately received the gift of tongues. Michelle*, our teenager, wanted to think about it and get back to me. When her time came

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she received the gift immediately. I learned that being childlike and just plain trusting God was the real issue, not the crazy name it, claim it books with wild emotions. How wonderful.

God was so gracious not only to me but to the poor dear ones that I was praying to heal and set free. Cayuga* and Wayne* counties were the poorest in the state. There were few medical facilities available and even fewer for the poor. My gifts saved and freed countless lives.

Eva Bell*, 62, of nearby Wolcott, was the very first person that I prayed for. I had known her for some time and had frequently visited her and her family. They were very poor and needed everything from food to fuel oil. I took care of them the best that I could. Eva was eager to receive my prayers. We prayed and prayed.

On January 6, Sunday evening she died at Myers Community Hospital*. Her funeral service was at Jewell Funeral Home* in Red Creek*. The family asked me to officiate. That spring Eva was buried in the North Wolcott Cemetery*.

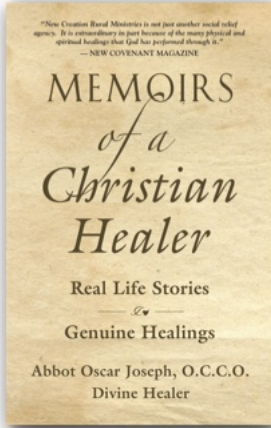
My poor dear ones, although many were unchurched, were eager for my healing prayers. They were all blessed, and most were healed. I was so excited about God's goodness and the experience of

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healing that before I prayed, I would give them a lengthy instruction on what to expect. They were very patient with me.

Quite some time later and after teaching many of these lessons I conducted a healing service at a local church. Traditionally before the prayer time I would give a teaching. Apparently on this occasion I taught too long. One old fellow in the front row said rather loudly, “When are you going to start praying?” I learned my lesson. From then on, I just simply asked, “Would you like to pray about that?”

New Creation Rural Ministries provided a wonderful venue for prayer. God had graced each and every prayer.



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