

## **HEALING SERVICE - WELCOMING WORDS - Friday, November 17, 2017**

Glory to Jesus Christ! My name is Fr. Peter Olsen, and I am the rector of St. Basil's. Serving with me will be Deacon Paul Federoff. Thank you, Fr. Deacon, for serving with me tonight. Before we begin our service, I wanted to take a few moments to welcome and thank all of you for coming and being with us. It is an honor and a privilege to have all of you worship with us tonight.

Life is a wonderful blessing from our Lord. There can be so many opportunities and possibilities before us as we make our way through this human life. Our Lord blesses us with the awesome gift and responsibility of free will, and permits us to make our own choices and decisions: what to believe, how we choose to live, and all of the other choices that we make in life. All of us also know very well that in life's journey we sometimes face bumps and roadblocks. Sometimes our basic human freedoms may be taken away from us. Sometimes we may be discriminated against and not treated fairly. Sometimes we may be hated and oppressed. These sins of humanity are just some of the bumps and roadblocks that people often face. Life, with all of its joys and excitement, also has its share of sorrow and grief. Our God is a personal God. Our God is a real Divine being who takes an active role in human life. Our God has not abandoned us. God respects the free will that he blessed us with. If we want God to be in our lives, it is up to us to invite Him into our lives. God does not force or coerce anyone to believe in Him, or to make Him a part of our lives.

Physical illness and sickness is an inescapable part of human existence. With all of the wonders and great abilities of modern medicine, there is still much room for God's help to endure and deal with sickness. There is also the sickness of the soul, spiritual sickness. If all of us look deeply within our hearts and honestly examine the words we have spoken, the deeds we have done, the feelings and attitudes that we have cultivated, all of us will see things that we are sorry for and that we need to change and improve. Inner peace of the heart is necessary in order to navigate our way through life and also deal with physical illness as it comes to us, as well as external oppression and temptations. It is my belief that we can only do this with God's help.

Faith in God is not complex. It is based on love, mercy, kindness and forgiveness. It is based on humility and self-judgement, not judgement of others. There are some very simple rules from which all the commandments of God come from: to love God above all things, to treat others the way that you would like others to treat you, and to love and show kindness to others.

It is my sincere hope that our humble effort to offer to God the prayers of this brief Service of Healing will help us to accomplish the things that I have spoken of. May the merciful and loving Lord bless us, guide us, and have mercy on us. Amen.