

Healing Prayer Team Guidelines Updated April 2026

Thank you so much for being willing to be a part of the St. Vincent's healing prayer team. Your efforts to do what Jesus did and to bring healing to His beloved people is greatly appreciated!

We are constantly in conversation, prayer and learning about the best practices for our parish regarding the operation of prayer ministry. Below please find the current items regarding the how-to's, guidelines, and expectations for our prayer team members.

Lifestyle Expectations of a Prayer Minister:

In order to serve on St. Vincent's prayer teams, one should:

- Be a **practicing Catholic** – attending Mass on Sundays, Holy Days of Obligation, following the [precepts of the Church](#), praying daily, and striving to love the Lord with all your heart, mind, soul and strength and your neighbor as yourself in your daily actions.
 - Be an active parishioner of St. Vincent's.
- Have **renounced all new-age/occult practices** such as (but not limited to): Ouija boards, Chakras, Tarot Cards, Tea Leaf Readings, Reiki Healings, Healing Touch, Healing Energies, Astrology, Numerology, Astral projection, Chi, Voodoo, Third Eye, Conjuring the Dead, Seances, Wicca, Santeria, Witchcraft, White Witchcraft, Sorcery, Satanism, Freemasonry, Divination, Yoga, Christ Consciousness, Divine Consciousness, Hindu gods, Ancestral Worship, shamans, Worship of Angels and other spirit worship, or any other new age and occult practices (this list is from the Rite of Entrance where those who are looking to become Catholic renounce the ways of the world and occult practices).
 - We recognize that many Catholics are unaware that the things listed above are occult practices, tapping into the demonic and condemned by the Church. If you are becoming aware of these things for the first time, you are still able to be a part of prayer teams if you choose to renounce these things (and no longer practice them) and confess any involvement you had with these practices in the sacrament of reconciliation.
- Lead a life not of perfection, but of humble discipleship of Jesus, walking in His friendship, communing with Him, connected to His body the Church, accountable to leadership, teachable and open to correction. Ultimately – humbly surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in your life to the best of your ability.

- God is not looking for performance, but for a love relationship! Our call to live as humble children of God, loved by our Heavenly Father.
- At the same time, from this love for Him and understanding of our identity, we should strive to be **diligent disciples of Jesus who are open to growth, mind renewal and correction, and who desire to follow the two greatest commandments** – loving God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength and our neighbors as ourselves.

“As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and remain in his love. “I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.” ~Jesus (John 15: 9-11)

“In this way we know that we love the children of God when we love God and obey his commandments. For the love of God is this, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome...”(1 John 5: 2-3)

- Perfection is NOT required to minister the healing love of Jesus nor to be loved by Him. We should want to stay connected to Jesus and to avoid sin and anything that would separate us from receiving His love, simply because it is what we were made for, NOT in order to “earn” our “right to have God work powerfully through us.”
- God chooses to make us *feeble* disciples ambassadors (2 Cor 5:20) of His love, Gospel message, and healing power precisely because He loves all people in their brokenness, not because He is looking for some perfect people to climb a ladder of holiness into their own ability to heal...we cannot, only He can...we can simply partner with Him, by His grace working through and in spite of our weaknesses. (See 2 Cor 12:9 and all the apostles’ stories:-)
- Life becomes “life to the full” (See John 10:10) when we repent – turning away from old ways of living and thinking that are opposed to God, and submitting to Jesus as our King, our Lord, our Teacher, Friend and Master! We **rely on the Holy Spirit** whom Jesus promised **will empower us** to renew our minds and live and love like Jesus.
 - Prayer team members are encouraged to continue to check out provided resources with solid teaching on healing ministry and to read the Bible in order to help in the mind renewal/sanctification process.

“Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if one has a grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do. And over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection. And let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” Colossians 3: 13-17

- Above all these—put on LOVE!! In healing ministry, one of the most important things we can do is **ask the Lord for His heart for people and pray with the compassion and love of Jesus.**
- Treat everyone with great love and kindness, but know also your capacity and maintain healthy ministry boundaries – you are not able nor called to be everyone’s best friend...but you can love the one the Lord puts in front of you within the scope of your ministry (more on scope in future pages).

PRACTICALS & PROTOCOLS FOR HEALING PRAYER MINISTRY

As a general rule practice and become proficient in the **5 step prayer model (see below)** While this is not the only way to pray for people, it is a great foundation and the format we will strive to adhere to as St. Vincent’s prayer teams during post-Mass or prayer-room ministry. It is also a good model to use (modify when needed) when praying for people as you are out and about.

5 STEP PRAYER MODEL FOR PRAYER TEAMS

1. Interview and expectation setting

- a. Know who is the leader of the team.
- b. Greet the person and introduce yourselves.
- c. Ask what they would like prayer for and set expectations.
- d. On a scale of 1-10 ask them to say what their pain level is.
- e. Ask what their range of motion is.

2. Silent prayer to the Holy Spirit

Silently ask the Holy Spirit how he wants you to pray for this affliction.

- a. Petition
- b. Command.
- c. Prophetic act.

3. Prayer Ministry.

- a. Pray as the Holy Spirit has directed you.
- b. Ask permission to lay your hand on their shoulder/back. Be respectful with this.
- c. Each team member should say a short prayer as the Holy Spirit suggested.

4. Check/Test for Healing

- a. Ask if the pain has changed.
- b. Is range of motion the same?
- c. Did you feel anything while we prayed? (Heat, tingling, shaking, peace, joy, etc.)
- d. If not fully healed ask if we can pray again and pray up to 3 times as in step 3 & 4 above.

5. Closure of the prayer session.

- a. Praise God for healing.
- b. Remind the person that God always wants to heal. We don't always know how or when, but we do know God wants to heal.
- c. We are here after every Sunday Mass so please stop by, we'd love to pray again.

See below for more nuances, reiterations and considerations while using this prayer model as a team.

1. **Always pray in the name of Jesus** (even though we have authority by virtue of simply being baptized into His name).
 - a. It is important to **use the name of Jesus audibly** when we pray so the people we are praying for don't fall into confusion or misunderstanding.
 - b. We want it to be clear to people we pray for that **it is Jesus who is ultimately their healer**, though we know that our actual participating/exercising of His authority is an important key and part of the identity He gives us sons and daughters and co-heirs with Christ.
 - i. When we talk about healings always talk about it as "Jesus healed/is healing (through us)."

- Aim to **keep your prayers short** – about 30 seconds or less during the first round and to pray in faith.
 - a. Longer prayers can often sound like begging or bargaining with God and not like praying knowing the truth that God wants to heal—He is the Healer, it is His nature.
- Be cognizant of the person you are praying for and of your other prayer team members.
 - a. It is a good idea to **keep your eyes opened while praying** so you are aware of how the recipient of prayer is responding – the clues you receive from them with your eyes open, as well as signals from your fellow prayer team, will help you to minister better.
- Be sure to **only command the creation** –e.g. “bones come back into right order in the name of Jesus.” You can even *for the most part avoid the word “command”* and just say “I speak to you, bones, in the name of Jesus to come in alignment with the word of God.”
 - a. **Never command God**, even in your tone. Watch out for saying “Holy Spirit, come now” in an aggressive commanding tone. It may be better to simply say, “Holy Spirit we invite You here, we thank You for what You are doing....we ask You to move in this way to burn up the cancer, etc.”
- **Praying after Masses on a team**
 - a. Always pray with at least one other person, but ideally teams of three.
 - i. Jesus sent the disciples out 2 x 2,
 - ii. here at St. Vincent’s, we want to always avoid praying with just one person.
 - iii. If a situation were to come about where there was only one person who showed up for the prayer team, then make the decision not to go over to that area after Mass so people know you are not “open for prayer”
 - b. Always pray in co-ed teams – at least one man and one woman per team.
 - i. If a situation should arise where two men are on a team together out of necessity, then have them pray only over other men. Same for the women.
 - c. If six people are present from the prayer teams, divide yourselves into 3 teams of two.
 - d. Quickly and pro-actively greet and organize the people in line. If needed, take a minute to organize yourselves into groups – simply let the people in line know you will be with them very soon. Once ready, one liaison from each group should go and bring the next person in line to your group (groups should be spread out and not too close to each other).

- i. If there is only one person in line, let the two members of one team start praying with him/her while the other team waits. The open team should be sure to make themselves look obviously open and ready to receive a pray-ee (this may encourage others who may be on the fence to come over).
 - ii. If after 5 minutes or so no one else has come over for prayer, you can join praying with the others, if appropriate.
 - iii. There are situations where too many people praying over one person may not be ideal – use your discretion and know that it is fine to also intercede from afar and not join the other team.
 - iv. When two teams do combine due to lack of a line at first, make sure that you pay attention to the line area and if a line does develop after time, branch back off with your partner as a separate team again when an appropriate time arises to do so.
- e. **Choose one person to be the leader/spokesperson** – the one who will explain the prayer process and guide the group through the steps.
 - i. This role can rotate throughout a prayer session – for instance if you have person A, B and C – person A can be the leader for the first person you pray for, then person B can be the leader for the next, etc. Establish this order before starting to pray over people.
 - ii. Once the leader has explained the process and asked the person being prayed for if they have any questions/are comfortable with the system/ready to start, then the leader should take their turn to pray first, followed by person b, then c, etc. Once all people have had a turn to pray (or communicated non-verbally to the leader that they don't feel called to pray outloud), then **the leader checks in with the person being prayed, assesses and explains what next steps the team will take. This may include:**
 - 1. Thanking God for the healing that's happening
 - 2. Explaining that we like to pray more than once
 - 3. Encouraging the pray-ee about the improvement
 - 4. asking more questions to the pray-ee about what he/she experienced
 - 5. Other
 - iii. The team proceeds as the leader explained –typically taking another turn praying over the person in the same format as the initial round.
 - iv. When finished, the leader is also the main person to give post-prayer instructions (others of course may chime in with

anything they feel called to share from the Lord, but wait until after the leader shares and see if it is still needed).

- When **interviewing** the person at the beginning (leader), let them know from the outset that they should **briefly** share the background and what's been going on (about a minute or so max).
 - a. We don't want to get them caught up in unbelief and looking at the problem too much, but we do want to know some specifics about the issue, so we can best pray for them
 - b. Be sure to establish a base level of pain or range of motion loss, etc. so that we can test after prayer. Explain why you are asking this if needed.
 - c. If the person is asking for prayer for something that they cannot currently test, then this is fine, and the next steps will suffice.
- **Remind the person being prayed for not to pray for themselves** (during this session while we pray over them), but to just focus on Jesus and pay attention to what is going on in their body.
 - a. Give the person being prayed for (if it's their first time) a head's up that the Holy Spirit may move in heat, cold, peace, tingling, or other ways and instruct them to just to focus on their body and what the Lord is doing (this builds faith and helps them to pay attention to a way He might work that they possibly didn't expect).
 - b. Always caveat that if you don't feel anything that doesn't mean God is not working, but "this is just something we want to let you know may happen (these manifestations of the Holy Spirit), so that you can be aware if you experience them that this is just a sign of the Lord working, and then when you give us feedback, we can take hints from the Lord's movement, in order to better partner with Him."
- **Giving a testimony to start off the session** – a healing you've seen recently, or have heard happen in the prayer teams or to one of your friends – can be helpful to build faith, especially if the person you're praying for doesn't yet (or may not yet) have an understanding of our God who heals.
 - a. Ask Holy Spirit (silently) which, if any, testimony you should share before you begin/as you are explaining the process to the person.
 - b. Keep testimonies short, but give enough space to let the glory of God and His desire to heal be known and for it to build faith and hope in the person.
- **Avoid saying anything that would make the person feel like they need to have enough faith or they won't be healed.**

- a. Remember, the person can be healed on your faith alone, they don't need to have faith to be healed.
 - i. The dead who were raised didn't have faith for their healing
 - ii. The fact that the people are showing up for prayer means they have enough faith to receive.
 - b. Encouraging the pray-ee to believe that Jesus wants to heal them can be good, but also take discernment and finesse – be sure not to enter into territory where it seems like if they don't have enough faith then they won't get healed or any other confusing or discouraging phraseology.
 - c. Be sure to THANK GOD for what He's doing, and even if there is no noticeable change.
- At the same time as you speak in faith of Jesus who loves to heal, **don't promise that the healing will come immediately**, and never make it look like you are trying to get the pray-ee to come in agreement with a healing they don't feel happened. You can, however
 - a. explain clearly the idea of standing on God's word and declaring healing over themselves (Isaiah 53 – “By His (Jesus') stripes I am healed, for example)
 - b. Invite them to keep coming back for more prayer from the team so we can, alongside them “keep hitting it” until the healing comes.
 - c. You can and should also encourage them to pray for themselves and declare the word of God over themselves in hope and persistence, knowing they are not “banging on heaven's door” cause Heaven has already answered – God is on their team.
- **Fix your eyes on Jesus when praying**, and remember we are following His own command to “heal the sick” to “lay our hands on the sick so that they may recover” (meaning He wills and wants healing for His people, no question).
 - a. “With God all things are possible.” (Matthew 19:26) – no matter how scary the case may be, we are always praying for full healing.
 - b. **Avoid** using the language: “God if it's your will to heal this person” or statements along those lines. Take the posture of an ambassador, a delivery person for the gift that Jesus already won for us on the cross.
 - c. Remember to exercise your dominion as a Christian and do what Jesus did –in a simple form –not falling back into man made traditions that lead us to “sacred cows” and put doubt in our minds.
 - d. “sacred cows,” include
 - i. the idea that there are big blocks to healing – like if unforgiveness, or sin, you can't be healed. Healing is not contingent on someone

being perfect, or striving for healing. Jesus healed sinners all the time.

- ii. The idea that this sickness is God-given so they can offer it up (of course while you are sick you can offer that pain up as a prayer, but it does not mean the Lord wants you to stay sick so you can “pray more effectively.” These somewhat common myths thrown around are harmful, and erode our faith focus on Jesus, as well as the focus and faith of the person receiving prayer.

- **Always encourage the people you pray for on toward healing**, even if nothing has happened in that direction (that we can see) YET
 - a. Explain that there are sometimes immediate healings, but sometimes progressive, and that we can and should keep coming for prayer AND praying for ourselves until we are healed.
 - b. Encourage with different testimonies where appropriate.
 - c. Follow up where appropriate.
 - d. And, if appropriate, you can let them know that, should the pain/ailment come back, they can continue to stand in authority and fight against it (once again, it is not God bringing the sickness back (or bringing it in the first place)).
- **Avoid a discipleship relationship** or explanation of what it means to follow Jesus until people are healed. After healing you can go for it and invite them into a discipling friendship, but beforehand it can also look like a contingency for healing – they do not need to be a perfect disciple of Jesus (or one at all) to be healed.
- **There are different contexts in which we pray** –some it is appropriate to keep hitting it hard and praying until the breakthrough comes, but other times it is not the right context for this kind of prayer.
 - a. Typically, after Mass there is only time for minimal “hitting hard” and an invitation to come back week after week. Especially be cognizant of the line of people waiting for prayer and the amount of prayer ministers. 5 minutes is a good “standard” time for prayer after Mass.
 - b. Of course, if there is major progress happening, you shouldn’t stop momentum, but keep going until the person is fully healed or the momentum slows or stops.

- **REFRAIN from giving any medical advice**, or personal anecdotes or suggestions from your own medical journey or others (except if it's a short testimony to build faith because you were healed by Jesus of the same thing).
 - a. This can be misconstrued as not believing in faith that they will be healed through Jesus alone
 - b. The person has their own journey with discernment and medical intervention, our job is to do the prayer side of things and leave the rest to the doctors/person seeking help.

- As a member of St. Vincent's prayer team you are **not permitted to give advice, counseling, or spiritual direction to people who come for prayer.**
 - a. Even if the person asks, the team members should politely say, "I can't tell you what to do, but we can pray for the Holy Spirit to fill you with wisdom and understanding for this situation."
 - b. Be careful not to disguise advice as prophetic insight

- **The scope of St. Vincent's Prayer Ministry** is limited to physical healing prayer, and prayer for peace. You are not permitted to do deliverance ministry or counseling. Ministers are expected to know when someone is asking for or seeking ministry beyond our scope and clearly communicate and stick to the boundaries of our healing prayer team ministry. You may refer people to other St. Vincent's approved resources when the need arises, or ask a more seasoned leader to explain to the person, if you are not comfortable.

- **Refrain from seeking and/or giving prophetic insight during the healing prayer sessions.**
 - a. The scope of the ministry is simply healing. If a person is looking for prophetic ministry, please let them know that is not what we are doing here/authorized to do here.
 - b. NEVER give directional words under the guise of prophecy (or at all)
 - i. If you feel the Lord is telling you something for the person, take it to further prayer later, and ask someone else for insight.
 - ii. Since we are all new and learning about prophecy, it's best to grow in a safe environment, where you can practice hearing God's voice – it is not good or safe to "practice" on people coming for healing prayer at the prayer teams.
 - iii. If the word was something God wants you to share and you don't share it, God will find another way to get the message to that person, so you don't need to worry.

- iv. Discuss any questions you have with a veteran on the team and let them help you at a separate time to grow in hearing God's voice.
 - 1. There's a possibility we will have further opportunities to learn how to move in the prophetic, but even if we have those, right now the healing prayer teams are reserved for healing prayer only, and not for prophecy.
- **Avoid any language that could be misconstrued and lead people to confusion that somehow what we are doing is New Age/occult/not Christian.**
 - a. Focus on Jesus and clarify terms like "manifestation" if you use it (this is a neutral term that just means "an event, action, or object that clearly shows or embodies something, especially a theory or an abstract idea" but has more recently been used by New Agers in prominent ways with a non-Christian practice of manifesting one's own future on one's own strength). It is also, however, used by St. Paul in 1 Corinthians: "manifestations of the Holy Spirit". It is best to avoid this word, as well as words like "energy" and other new age buzz words.
 - b. Be able to explain the reason you are praying as you do with an example or explanation from the Gospels or Paul's letters
 - i. For instance – prophetic acts...Jesus used prophetic acts like putting clay onto a Blind man's eyes.
- **Other Basic logistics/etiquette:**
 - a. Try to take a breath mint or gum before praying for people.
 - b. No massaging or movement during prayer and be sure never to lay hands on someone without permission, and never even ask to lay hands on the injury if it's an inappropriate area or could be misconstrued (simply ask if you can lay a hand on their shoulder or do not lay hands at all). If you do not lay hands on the person, please fold your hands in prayer and do not hover your hands as this can give a wrong appearance of a new age / demonic counterfeit version of healing prayer called reiki or healing touch (even though it's not inherently bad, we do not want anyone to misconstrue).
 - c. Don't forget pleasantries and introductions. Help one another out with names, by introducing yourself first and asking their name loudly, if you are new to the person being prayed for and your partner seems to know them already, but may have forgotten their name.

- d. Remember we are not here to socialize with one another during this time, please keep all other conversations with fellow prayer team members until after there are clearly no more people waiting in line for prayer.
- e. Overall just interact with the people you pray for according to typical social norms.
- f. Keep confidential the prayer requests of people, unless they give you permission to share.
- g. Be sure to pray loud enough for your fellow prayer team members and the person being prayed for to hear, but not too loud that everyone around you is distracted or can't hear their own team.
- h. If someone experiences a healing, invite them to share their testimony by using the form online or emailing the office.
 - i. If they are open you can also grab a video testimony of them sharing about what happened. Have them say at the end of the video whether or not they give permission for that video to be shared through St. Vincent's youtube page and social media (worldwide distribution).
- i. And last but not least...do all things in LOVE.

A Word on Emotional Needs or Potential Demonic Affliction Needs/Prayer Requests or Cases that are Beyond the Scope of our Prayer Teams

Basic steps from Fr. Alex

- Prayer team may pray and release God's Shalom Peace upon them. (The same way you pray for healing you pray for peace).
 - a. Simply ask the Holy Spirit to pour out His peace in the person and to calm any anxiety.
 - b. You may say (calmly) things like "Anxiety go in Jesus' name."
 - c. Check in and see what effect, if any, it had. If they experienced peace but aren't sure if it is free or lasting, have them go home and sleep that night and see what effect comes. Let them know they can return if there is no change.
 - d. If some change and they return, continue praying with them the same way until full peace is received.
 - e. DO NOT enter into any kind of spiritual warfare or "confrontational prayer" simply pray for peace, even and especially if the person is having demonic manifestations. Keep your prayers short and then talk to the person afterwards and check in on how they are feeling.
- If the person is not manifesting, but has chosen to reveal to you (never pry or ask, this would only come out naturally from what they CHOOSE to share) – if they are describing or experiencing heavy oppression, slavery from unforgiveness, or hooked on sin of bad habit, they should be referred to Freedom in Christ ministry next.

- a. Let them know we have a ministry that will pray with you for a longer period of time –they are trained in the unbound method and you can make an appointment with them. (remind them our scope here does not cover this kind of long prayer).
 - b. Tell them to call or email Olivia in the main office and let her know that the prayer teams referred them to talk to someone from Freedom in Christ.
- If someone is clearly manifesting, clear demonic presence / activity, then get a more seasoned prayer team member to come and help you, and they can refer the person directly to the main office 619-299-3880 to ask for an appointment with Fr. Alex. At this point please also email fralex@vincentcatholic.org to explain what happened during prayer and that NAME of person may be contacting him through the office. ** For most cases this will not be necessary – Freedom in Christ will be enough. Once they are at the office, Olivia can also help discern if more than freedom in Christ is necessary, and pass the person along to Fr. Alex.

Emergency Cases/Referrals and Intervention

- If someone comes for prayer and appears to be a potential danger to themselves or shares something that is beyond your scope and needs immediate attention...
 - you may use the code (if a code is necessary and prudent) with your team member: “Can you go get the healing oil?” That will be the signal to your partner to find Fr. Alex, a Deacon, Peggy or Rafa to come and assist with the situation.
- In the case of someone indicating they want to kill themselves/suicidal ideation, do not let them leave without calling the police.
- For less dire mental health issues that people bring up during the course of their prayer request or other conversation, you can refer them to the diocese mental health resources webpage:

<https://sdcatholic.org/family-life-and-spirituality/mental-health-ministry/>

Thank you again for your ministry!