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Ending

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Ending

Pope Francis was asked who he was as a person, and he replied: "a sinner." He was not speaking about the ending of his life's story, but only a part of his journey. For us too, the hurts we have endured and those we might have caused to others, or to ourselves, are not the ending for us. Rather, they can be occasions for the deeply satisfying spiritual process of healing.

Many persons have considered "sin" as either an outmoded concept or not applicable to basically good persons such as we see ourselves to be. But we are subject to a fuller expression of the truth about our human condition when we discover that almost all hurts and negative experiences, both past and present, can be graciously transformed through first acknowledging them, and then moving through a conscious process of healing to a peaceful ending. Whether using the word "sin" or not, we can learn through experience that interior shadows, exposed to the light, can actually add to our sense of peaceful integrity, and need not be avoided or denied as existing within us.

Most of us have at times trusted other's care for us so that we could risk sharing with them one or other occurrence that we had previously kept to ourselves. And in naming it, we found that we were accepted, even with our weaknesses and flaws. When we are aware of being loved, we can accept ourselves with the faults and failings, setbacks and hurts that are part of our lives.

We are not able, on our own, to put an ending to all the interior confusion and mistakes, hurts and injustices that have disturbed us. We are good people who aspire to be more loving, but we cannot love ourselves or our families, friends, associates and humankind completely. Only God loves us so absolutely that we can bring anything into that relationship that needs healing, and receive it. We might be accustomed to praying for the physical, emotional and spiritual well-being of others, yet we might be somewhat shy of bringing to God some of the personal thoughts and feelings that make us uncomfortable. But God desires to hear from us and to heal us, as well.

The parts of our lives that we might not wish had ever happened can bring us harm if they are continually untended, just as even a small break on our skin can become infected if we do not clean it and take the means that are necessary to promote healing. A physical cut or bruise, when healed, merely restores our body to how it was before. Spiritual healing of attitudes and choices, painful memories and present distress, brings us to a deeper satisfaction with our lives than we have ever had previously. Healing in our

hearts and spirits moves us forward in the proper direction of our lives, which is much more than "getting over" a painful incident.

If some of our negative experiences come to mind, we can become discouraged, and then avoid them completely. But when we look towards God, loving us as we are, we can safely enter the graceful healing process that puts an ending to each particular episode of thinking and feeling that we bring, in honest admission, to that trusting relationship.

When we connect with the love of God, we can become, like Pope Francis, aware that we are indeed sinners, but are continually being healed.