

Sally Flores

Biography of Ministry

September 30, 2012

My name is Sally Flores and I have been a parishioner at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in Clovis for over 15 yrs. I have been involved in Raphael Health ministry as a faith community nurse for 10 yrs. I converted to Catholicism in 1991 before Carlos and I got married. Before that I was baptized Lutheran but was not raised in the faith.

I have been involved with the OLPH Raphael Health ministry for 10 yrs. Roxanna Stevens; coordinator invited my husband and me to get involved. When my boys were babies I was not as involved as Carlos was who began helping with first aid booth at the festival and Blood Pressure Sunday's. I started out volunteering at OLPH Catholic School where our children attended. I was a room mom, health volunteer and helped at many events. I enjoyed being at school with my children and getting to know their teachers. The room parent activities that I created would always be focused on our Catholic faith and developing ways to convey that faith to our children. I wanted them to experience faith in every way through out their day in school and sports and everywhere. For the field trips I would make things that related the field trip to scripture and our faith so that there was a Catholic element woven into the educational activity. As our children got older I changed from room mom activities to school wide activities. I directed a health fair for the school with a spiritual focus, teaching children how to care for their bodies as a temple of God. Each booth featured a specific Saint related to the topic so that they would know who they could pray to for help with school or sports or other issues. Father Robert, my pastor, was involved in the health fair by sharing with children ways to pray and have spiritual health. Other projects at the school involved creating a Family Life program with my husband based on Theology of the Body and Catholic moral teaching. We were involved in this for several years. I have given talks to staff at OLPH and St. Helen's school during the pandemic preparation regarding the flu and preventative measures. This pandemic planning was church, school and community

wide. The spiritual care kits developed from this planning and have been used to reach different groups about spiritual health. I have been involved with the yearly church and school festival. We provide blood pressure screening and heart healthy information. We also provide any first aid needed for the entire time of the festival. In addition to these basic functions we provide the parishioners and community with a specific health-faith topic. We have done flu and pandemic planning, disaster planning with spiritual care kits, religious freedom, and craft activities for children and child safety / injury prevention information. We have coordinated our health ministry efforts with the Fresno City CERT group who provided emergency planning. Also we had in the past Fresno City Parks and Recreation Mobil Fitness Van come out to address obesity by teaching healthy eating and activity with children and adults. All information that we provide encourages the community to discover the health and faith connection and change to a healthier wholistic life style.

As part of Raphael Health ministry I have also provided the church and school unpaid professional nursing services such as organizing, updating and managing the student health records and school immunization requirements along with specific health screenings. As a faith community nurse and a past coordinator of the Saint Agnes Health Ministry Outreach program I have been involved in the annual Diocesan Congress Religious Education. I have been involved in providing health ministry information booths and specific talks on health ministry. The talks have included: "What is Health Ministry", "Encountering Christ", "Family Life Program in schools", and "Uniting Our Sufferings to Christ". For several years Raphael Health Ministry has been the sole provider of first aid at this event.

During my personal growth and development in health ministry I have been able to complete a Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry through a diocesan cohort with Holy Names University of Oakland. The project that came from my masters program focused on the lack of sacramental knowledge and a secular concept of health that has little

room for God or His plan to bring us health and wholeness. Through theological reflection I introduced how health is meant to be from God's perspective and how we develop this healthy living in practice with our faith. Through out our life's journey we will encounter illness and disease and struggle with suffering but God has plans that involves healing and hope that comes by our practice of faith, word, worship and prayer to accompany us through our struggles. Illness and death can be a life giving experience when we live life in this way. The use of the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick is part of God's plan to provide healing and comfort but many Catholics do not understand when it is appropriate and why it is important. The eight articles I developed was a starting point for this evangelization. I have used it in many settings including Right of Christian Initiation for Adults at OLPH, homebound ministry and training Eucharistic Ministers to the Sick. These articles are in Spanish and the Korean pastor at our church has also used it in his language to teach about the health-faith connection and anointing for the sick. I created a book that compiles all of the articles together to be used as a catechetical tool with reflections and prayer for each article. I prepared as well a guide to the Rite of Anointing for priests. There are still many ways in which I hope to share this part of our faith and change the way people address health through a new faith lens.

My full time day job is working as an RN currently at Children's Hospital Central California. I have been a nurse for over 22 years. Most of my experience has been in the outpatient clinic areas of Children's Hospital. I have also worked in the adult health world of Labor and Delivery, Newborn Nursery and GYN. I recently worked several years for Saint Agnes as the Faith Community Nurse Coordinator then in Hospice as a bedside nurse. Hospice was an amazing experience for me and it was from these experiences that I saw Christ in the sick and dying patients I cared for. I currently infuse spiritual care into the care I give children in the cardiology clinic on a daily basis. I am not available to work in health ministry full time but I do my best to do ministry on the week nights and weekends.

I work with Roxanna Stevens the coordinator of Raphael Health Ministry to develop programs and create teaching materials on health-faith formation and ministry. We do not have a specific health counsel at OLPH but our pastor is directly involved, participating and provides direction for our ministry activities. Father Robert Borges is our pastor at OLPH and is very supportive of health ministry in our parish. He meets regularly with Roxanna, the coordinator, to be involved in our activities and to meet the needs of our parishioners. He calls on me often to head up specific projects like the Anointing Masses and training of the Eucharistic Ministers to the sick.

I do not directly supervise the volunteers or nurses but I assist Roxanna with any ministry needs. I do provide guidance and education for home bound ministry and Eucharistic ministers to the sick. Raphael Health ministry trains volunteers for home bound ministry. Roxanna has been the main trainer and supervisor. I have done an eight part series with them regarding the health-faith connection based on the articles I wrote for my thesis. Each article addresses health and illness through the lens of our Catholic faith culminating with the explanation of the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. I mostly work with Roxanna and Carlos, my husband, who is also a faith community nurse in this ministry. We are currently very small group of FCN's but hope to recruit more nurses in the future. I do not personally have an office or hold office hours. Raphael health ministry has an office and specific office hours that are managed by Roxanna Stevens as I work full time at the hospital. My role at this time is educational and training for the volunteers in our ministry so I am not involved in the referral process and act as a resource. I document time and content of any event or educational activity for Raphael Health Ministry and report this information to our pastor. There is a small budget which is managed by Roxanna. I have not been involved in the survey but there was one conducted recently. The results are reviewed by the pastor and coordinator and then planning is made accordingly.

We have many events coming up throughout the year. Some events are annual and some are new. Our annual church and school festival was held in September which included BP checks, heart healthy info, Flu information, spiritual care kits. We also provided specific health education focusing on children's health based on the teachings of the church. Parents responsibilities as well as what children need to know to be sport healthy, concussions, hydration, injuries and spirituality on the field. November will be the next anointing mass provided for the parish community after the 1230 mass. We are also planning to provide the new Rite of pregnancy a couple times a year. During Lent we hope to provide a new class on End of Life issues. I have been working to develop our Raphael Health Ministry information on our church web page. We hope to tell people about the many activities and programs happening in the ministry as well as linking health-faith information through the intentional care of the spirit.

My vision for this ministry goes along with the Popes intentions to explore our faith deeper. This is the Year of Faith starting in October so I would like to see education and events that speak to developing a deeper knowledge of our faith, living our faith and sharing our faith through health ministry. Unfortunately, many lay Catholic and ministers of health do not know their faith or adhere to the Church teachings in their daily living. This is very concerning that our faith among our own parishioners is so weak and distorted. I think as ministers of health we need to be solidly grounded in our faith and be equipped to teach the good news in everything we do especially in our ministry where people needs us to represent the church and guide health decisions based on doctrine. I plan to use this Year of Faith to focus on the foundation of faith we as ministers have in ministry and how our serving others will be authentic and in line with our Church.

This ministry at OLPH – Raphael is successful because of the dedication of our leader, Roxanna who is constantly looking for ways to serve others and spread the news of the Gospel so that we may all reach wholeness and health during our life's journey. She is supported by her pastor in this mission of health. My husband and I try our best to

support all the efforts of Raphael Health Ministry to continue to be a strong ministry in our parish and school community and a leader in health in our dioceses. In order to do this we need more strong committed nurses with faith community nurse training who want to develop the program and serve the community on a regular basis. We also need to reach deeper into the Spanish and Korean communities of our parish and serve their health needs as well but this will require nurses from this group who can relate to each individual community and the specific needs they have. We need more volunteers to step up for home bound and serving the sick. These volunteers needs to be involved not only in the ministry but the foundational training and on going conversion of their faith to reach a deeper spiritual level of discipleship and service. We need support in the areas of development of programs and teaching groups about the beauty of the faith. We want to impart the importance of the connection of health that God calls us to. We also need money to create materials to reach a wider group and inspire people to truly live their faith in a healthy way based on the teachings of the church.

I also co-coordinate with Roxanna Stevens the Health Ministry program for the Dioceses of Fresno and developing our ministry web page. We meet with 6 other nurses to create health ministry in our diocese through education, support, program development and continued personal spiritual growth grounded in our Catholic faith. As a co-coordinator I work with these nurses from different parish and I am encouraged by their interest to serve their community. They bring to the table the potential for new programs focused on wholeness and healing and the development of much needed health ministry programs in the vast rural and Spanish communities of our diocese.

I am so very blessed to be a part of such an important ministry and pray unceasingly for God's guidance to serve his people through His will.

Daughter in Christ,

Sally Flores RN-BC, BSN, FCN, MA in Pastoral Ministry

