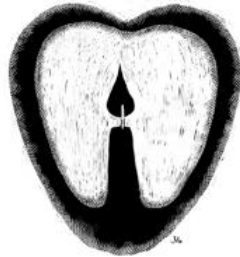


The Health – Faith Connection is a series of catechetical articles for the purpose of exploring healing in the Catholic faith and preparation for the healing sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. It is presented to the faithful of OLPH Church in Clovis as well as the Diocese of Fresno by Sally Flores, RN, BSN, FCN of Raphael Health Ministry and a candidate for a Master of Arts in pastoral ministries from Holy Names University.

*Sin and
Sickness
Healing
Forgiveness*



The relationship between sickness and sin is complex. We cannot assume that there is direct causal relationship nor should we assume that sickness is God's punishment for personal sinfulness. However, these elements exist and sickness, like sin, is part of the human condition. After the sin of our first parents, many forms of disorder entered the world: sin, sickness, imbalance, disturbance, pestilence, geological phenomenon, war, poverty, injustice, etc. (Kasza, 2007). If this was all we knew, we would fall into despair and lack any hope in our lives' meaningful existence. In God's mercy, Jesus Christ was sent to restore our relationships and create order in the world. By his suffering, death and resurrection, Jesus Christ redeemed all of creation. The result of this redemption is transformation. "Sickness need not end in sorrow, but, when joined to the sufferings of Christ, becomes redemptive and transformative in itself" (Kasza, 2007, p. 12). So the complex relationship of sin and sickness must be understood as we strive for healing and proceed toward wholeness. The ancient beliefs about healing are not that different from our own but Jesus brought us a new healing full of hope.

Ancient beliefs about healing:

- Healing comes only from God. To seek other means (like magic) meant to go against God's covenant.
- The home was the main place for healing involving direct prayer.
- It was OK to go to the temple and ask the prophets to intercede for the patient's healing through prayer and medicine.

Jesus' healing mission brought liberation from anything that prevents one from coming close to God, including sin and sickness. Healing is an invitation to conversion, the transformation of hearts and lives. Sin and sickness are not punishments but opportunities for growth. "Go, your faith has made you well." Jesus said this of most healings because he was calling attention to the transformation made present in the healing and its saving effects. Called to participation in God's own life and healing, we have sanctuary and freedom from the slavery of sin and sickness. Sin and sickness often force us to confront the imbalance in our lives. It is an opportunity to examine what needs to change or removed so that we can grow in holiness and wholeness as children of God.

Jesus' healing reveals God's plan for salvation

Jesus offered healing because he saw the sick person marginalized in society. When he healed, Jesus invited the restored person to begin again and continue living in the world. Jesus invited the newly restored person to be "well" and sin no more. The word means not only physical healing, but "to save, rescue and

liberate as well as to heal and preserve” (Gaiser, 2010, p. 8).

- Although sickness is part of the human condition **Jesus’ healing mission showed the immanent presence of God’s reign.**

The purpose in his healings was always for the greater good, **namely that God’s grace should be made manifest** (Kasza, 2007). The Church continues the tradition of Jesus’ healing mission.

Forgiveness is an essential part of healing

We are all sinners and we are all broken, in need of healing. Forgiveness is always part of healing the whole person. We are multi-dimensional beings so when we are suffering emotionally and /or spiritually, it affects our physical body as well.



Forgiveness:

- Heals the body, mind and soul.
- Restores relationship with self, other and God.
- Lifts our burdens so that we can start again with new life.
- Cleanses us and opens our hearts to receive the graces available to us through the sacraments.

There is no sin that is greater than God’s mercy. His forgiveness flows abundantly if we surrender. The sacrament of Reconciliation is always available to the sick person. The healing sacraments complement each other and it is

important that they are each understood and celebrated in their own unique way.

Healing in our post-modern world:

- Calls for seeing our brokenness as an opportunity for change in ourselves and the world in which we live.
- Healing of sin and sickness must be addressed since we are multidimensional beings and in order for wholeness to be restored.
- Sin and sickness, because of the Paschal Mystery, is seen as a beginning, not an ending.
- The healing sacraments of the Church (Reconciliation and the Anointing of the Sick) together with the Eucharist provide opportunity for healing, forgiveness and hope, allowing us to start again.

“He took our infirmities and bore our diseases” (Mt 8:17).



Raphael Health Ministry is here to guide and support you on your health journey. Office hours are Mondays and Wednesdays from 9 a.m. until noon. Phone Number: (559) 298-5443.

Works Cited

- Gaiser, F. (2010). In touch with Jesus: healing in Mark 5:21-43. *Word & World*, 5-15.
- Kasza, J. C. (2007). *Understanding Sacramental Healing: Anointing and Viaticum*. Chicago: Hillenbrand Books.

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