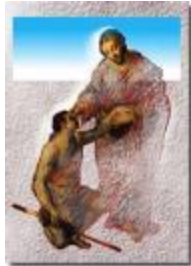


The Health – Faith Connection is a series of catechetical articles for the purpose of exploring healing in the Catholic faith and preparation for the healing sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. It is presented to the faithful of OLPH Church in Clovis as well as the Diocese of Fresno by Sally Flores,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



IS ANYONE AMONG YOU SICK?

The Church, in its healing ministry, has the role of restoring people to health and wholeness in Christ Jesus. All of the baptized are responsible for the care, prayers and supporting the sick so they may experience healing.

Illness

- We all experience illness and suffering at some point in our life.
- Society looks at illness as taboo and often tries to hide those who are in need of healing.
- The main effect of illness is alienation: from self and community and/or God, which affects spiritual well-being and complicates healing.
- Illness is not restricted to physical illness or incapacitation; it may be mental, spiritual or emotional.
- Illness affects all parts of our being and affects the communities to which we belong.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church says this about illness:

1500 - In illness, man experiences his powerlessness, his limitations and his finitude. Every illness can make us glimpse death.

1501 - Illness can lead to anguish, self-absorption, sometimes even despair and revolt against God.

Suffering involves much more than physical pain; its power extends beyond the human body to all that is the human person (Casey, 1991, p. 44).

- There will always be suffering.
- Suffering is complex and very personal. No one can truly understand another person's suffering.

Responses to suffering:

- Denial is a protective mode from the pain of facing our sufferings.
- Resistance is a response to anger at our suffering.
- Resistance recognizes the reality of the affliction and moves to alleviate the suffering.
- Acceptance dares us to enter into the heart of suffering to find meaning.
- Acceptance often reveals wisdom and new courage.

Our tradition recognizes that, ultimately, life is a mystery and that no one can ever fully articulate, explain or codify the human experience. It recognizes that suffering is an essential aspect of that mystery (Casey, 1991, p. 48).



So what do we do with suffering?

Our faith helps us understand the value of suffering.

- God does not cause our suffering, but allows us the opportunity to find meaning in our suffering.
- God is ever present in our suffering and shares our afflictions.
- Suffering is meaningless and fearsome if it is isolated from the whole of our lives and

our community (Westberg McNamara, 2006).

- “It is only when suffering is related to the process of living that it becomes valuable” (Westberg-McNamara, 2006, p. 25).

Article 5 para.1505 - Moved by so much suffering, Christ not only allows himself to be touched by the sick, but he makes their miseries

his own: "He took our infirmities and bore our diseases" (United States Catholic Conference, 1994).

Christians have an opportunity while experiencing pain and illness, to do so with faith that helps them grasp the mystery of suffering and bear it with courage and strength. Christ gives this suffering meaning and value for our salvation and that of the world.

Sickness can become a time of self-evaluation and -discovery. This transforming process of self-discovery is an opportunity to grow closer to the Lord. Many questions arise during a period of recovery or suffering such as, **“What is God telling me?”** and **“How can I use this time to make changes in my life?”** The transformation should lead us to attend to our relationships seeking wholeness.

Role of the sick in the Church

The role of the sick in the Church is to remind others of the essential, or higher, things. By their witness, the sick show that our mortal life must be redeemed through the mystery of Christ’s death and resurrection (PCS, 1983, para.3).

- The sick have a special role because of their unique participation in the sufferings of Christ.
- The sick minister to their community about “essential things” not by just being sick in our midst but by challenging us to be compassionate and engage in acts of prayer and service (Larson-Miller, 2005, p. 67).

“The **prophetic** role of the sick person in our midst, through, their conforming to the **“Anointed One,”** transforms “the community’s **consciousness** through the **witness** of [the sick person’s] own confrontation with mortality” (Larson-Miller, 2005, p. 68).



Remember that our life is like the wind, and yet we are destined for eternal life with God. (PCS – 254)



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.

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