

Catholic Health Care Day

Part I: The Miracles of Jesus and
Implications for the Church's Care of
the Sick

Healing is personal

- Jesus cleansed the leper by touching him (Mt 8:2-3).
- Jesus cured the blind man by spitting on the ground to make clay to anoint the man's eyes (Jn 9:6-7).
- Jesus wanted to see the woman with the hemorrhage who was cured by touching his garments (Mk 5:25-34).

Healing body, mind, and soul

- Jesus comforts the widow at Nain who lost her son. He raises the son from the dead and gives him to his mother (Lk 7:11-15).
- Before Jesus forgives the sins of the paralytic. To show his authority to forgive sins, he tells the paralytic, “Rise, take up your pallet, and go home” (Lk 5:15-26).
- Jesus cures the paralytic, telling him to rise, take up his pallet, and walk. Later, he warns the paralytic to sin no more, lest something worse befall him (Jn 5:1-16).

Concern for the whole person

- Jesus went about teaching, preaching, and healing. He had pity on the crowds who were like sheep without a shepherd. Jesus told the disciples to pray for more laborers for the harvest (Mt 9:35-38).
- Jesus lamented that the people do not see, hear, or understand. Would that they perceive with their eyes, hear and understand with their ears, turn to Jesus and be healed (Mt 13:13-15).

Anointing of the sick

- “Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven” (James 5:14-15).
- Prayer and the sacraments are important parts of being healed and forgiven. Working with pastoral care is a help to the person’s spiritual life.

The role of faith

- The blind men are asked, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord." Jesus touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith be it done to you." (Mt 9:28-29)
- Bartimaeus, a blind beggar cried out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Throwing off his cloak, he came to Jesus. Jesus asked, "What do you want me to do for you?" Bartimaeus said, "Master, let me receive my sight." Jesus said, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." (Mk 10:46-52)

The role of faith

- The father of a possessed boy is challenged to have faith. All things are possible to him who believes. The father cried out, "I believe; help my unbelief!" Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit.
- The disciples asked why they were unsuccessful. Jesus responded, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer." (Mk 9:20-29)

The danger of a lack of faith

- Jesus fell asleep in the boat when a storm came up. The disciples woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" Jesus rebuked the wind and the waves. He said to them, "Where is your faith?" They marveled, "Who then is this, that he commands even wind and water, and they obey him?" (Lk 8:22-25)
- Jesus visits his home town, where they said, "Where did this man get such wisdom and mighty deeds? Is he not the carpenter's son?" They took offense at him. He did not work many mighty deeds there because of their lack of faith. (Mt 13:54-58)

Giving thanks to God

- Jesus met ten lepers who asked for mercy. He sent them to the priests. One of them, a Samaritan, returned praising God. Jesus said, "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner? Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well." (Lk 17:11-19)

Moral Implications

- Patients should be given personal attention reflecting their human dignity.
- Medical staff should care not just for the body, but also for the mind and soul.
- Medical staff should work with pastoral staff.
- We should strengthen our faith and the faith of our patients.
- We should be thankful to God for the gift of health.

Questions for Reflection

1. How can I can treat the sick in a more personal way?
2. How can I practice concern for the whole person, body, mind, and soul?
3. How do I cooperate with the need for pastoral care on the part of my patients?
4. How does my faith enter into my role as a health care provider?
5. How do I give thanks for the gifts of life and healing that come from God?

Catholic Health Care Day

Part II: "Go and Do Likewise"

The New Testament Admonition in
Catholic Hospitals

Jesus' Commission to Heal

- And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal. (Lk 9:1-2)
- Jesus sent out the twelve, charging them to go after the lost sheep of the house of Israel.
"Preach as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying, give without pay." (Mt 10:5-8)

Jesus' Commission to Heal

- The Lord sent out the disciples. “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.
- “Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace be to this house!’ And if a son of peace is there, your peace shall rest upon him; but if not, it shall return to you.
- “Remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages. Whenever you enter a town, eat what is set before you; heal the sick in it and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’” (Lk 10:1-9)

The Gifts of the Spirit: Healing

- Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.
- To one is given the utterance of wisdom, to another the utterance of knowledge, to another faith, to another gifts of healing, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.
- All these are inspired by the same Spirit, who apportions to each one as he wills. (1 Cor 12:4-11)

Healing and the Sabbath Rest

- Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the LORD. (Ex 31:15)
- The Pharisees said, "Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the sabbath?" Jesus answered, "Have you not read what David did when he was hungry: how he entered the house of God, and took and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat? The Son of man is lord of the sabbath. Is it lawful on the sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to destroy it?" Jesus restored the man with the withered hand. (Lk 6:1-11)

Healing and the Sabbath Rest

- A woman had sickness and could not straighten herself. Jesus laid his hands upon her and she was made straight. Jesus answered, "Does not each of you, on the sabbath, untie his ox or his ass from the manger, and lead it to water? Ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?" (Lk 13:10-17)
- Jesus asked, "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath, or not? Which of you, having a son or an ox that has fallen into a well, will not pull him out on a sabbath day?" (Lk 14:1-6)

The need for prayer and rest

- Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go before him, while he dismissed the crowds. Then he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone. (Mt 14:22-23)
- The more they heard about Jesus, the more the multitudes gathered to be healed. But he withdrew to the wilderness and prayed. (Lk 5:15-16)
- Jesus went out to the mountain to pray; and all night he continued in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called his disciples, and chose from them twelve whom he named apostles. (Lk 6:12-16)

Jesus, the divine physician

- "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." (Lk 5:31-32) Jesus is the divine physician.

Jesus, the author of life

- In him was life, and the life was the light of men. (Jn 1:4) Jesus is the author of life.
- For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. (Jn 5:21) We find life only in Jesus.

Jesus, the resurrection

- In the context of the raising of Lazarus from the dead, Jesus said to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, he who is coming into the world." (Jn 11:25-27)

Life after death with Christ

- Jesus told his disciples, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. (Mt 16:24-25)
- If the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. So we are always of good courage; we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, but we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. (2 Cor 5:1-9)

Moral Implications

- Jesus told the disciples to heal without charge, while the laborer deserves his wage: We must be mindful of the infirm who are poor or disadvantaged.
- Jesus is the divine physician: We cooperate with God in working to heal the body, as disciples of Christ.

Moral Implications

- Jesus is the author of life: We respect the divine gift of life from conception.
- Jesus teaches us to embrace the cross: We are not afraid to respect the dignity of human life even to natural death.
- Jesus is the resurrection: More than caring for the body, we should prepare our souls for eternal life with Christ.

Questions for Reflection

1. How can I see my work in health care as a cooperation in the healing power of Christ and the healing gift of the Spirit?
2. How am I sensitive to the needs of the poor and the marginalized in my work?
3. How am I generous with my time for the sick? At the same time, how do I safeguard my personal need for prayer, rest, and renewal?
4. How can I work to protect the value of human life from conception to natural death?
5. How can I work in my medical capacity to prepare a person for his or her death?

Catholic Health Care Day

- To view more about this presentation, see:
www.jgray.org/healthcare