

GOD LOVES AND HEALS
(1Jn. 4:8 and Ex.15:26)



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“...God is love” (1Jn. 4:8) and “I am the LORD who healeth thee” (Ex.15:26)

Introduction

All types of healings, deliverance and other expected blessings are only the by-product of our 8-dimensional relationship with Jesus, fellowship with the Holy Spirit and growth in this relationship and fellowship through divine worship. Jesus baptizes everyone with fire and Spirit (Mt. 3:11). Therefore, when the relationship with Jesus is sincere and strong, he will baptize his disciples with fire and Spirit. Divine worship will help everybody to grow in this relationship and fellowship. Divine worship includes Personal Prayer p. 97, Common Prayers p. 101, Special Prayers p. 103, constituent elements p. 97/p. 101 and Home Works pp. 104-112.

What is Love?

Love means to stand in favour of someone, even though the concerned person does not deserve it. God loves means God stands in favour of everybody, even of sinners. St Thomas Aquinas said in Summa, "To love is to will the good of another" (STh I-II,264, corp. art).

To love is to will the good of another. All other affections have their source in this first movement of the human heart toward the good. Only the good can be loved. Passions are evil if love is evil and good if it is good (CCC. 1766).

Lust is just the opposite of love. Lust means the agent is always in favour of enjoying sexual pleasures even though the other party does not like it. There is no element of lust in the love of God but it is full of mercy and compassion and leads the concerned towards repentance and reconciliation.

"When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick" - (Mt. 14:14). The compassion of Jesus towards the sufferer is the foundation of the healings he performed.

I. Specialties of the Love of God

God loves humankind immensely. God's love has few characteristics and specialties.

1. It is a steadfast love - Is. 54:10; Is. 49:15; Mt. 5: 45-47

"For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the Lord, who has compassion on you" (Is. 54:10). Again prophet Is.49:15 remarks "even if a mother forgets her sucking child,

God will not forget that child." Jesus says, God loves both good people and bad people alike (Mt. 5:45-47).

2. It is an unconditional love - This unconditional love is manifested in the return of the prodigal son (Lk.15:16-32). It does not seek anything in return as in the case of the love of the mother towards her child. God is neither man nor woman but God is a perfect father and perfect mother (CCC. 370). To an extent God's love is manifested in the love of the parents.

3. There is a plan in this love - Jer. 29:11 and Rom. 8:28 - It is a plan of welfare and not of destruction. But Satan too has a plan for humanity (Col. 2:14-15). It is a plan just contrary to the plan of God. The plan and purpose of God is well explained in CCC.1. It answers the question, "Why has God created you?" God has created you to know God, to love God, seek God and share a blessed life with Him. This is the plan of God.

4. It is a providential love - Ps. 127:1-2 and Mt. 6:25-34 - God provides everything according to our needs. In Gen. 22:14 it is written, Abraham called that place, 'Jehovah Jireh' because it meant, 'The LORD will provide'; and it is said to this day, 'On the mount of the LORD, it shall be provided.'

5. There is no punishment in the love of God - "This is like the days of Noah to me: Just as I swore that the waters of Noah would never again go over the earth, so I have sworn that I will not be angry with you and will not rebuke you" (Is. 54:9).

But the Church says that, there is punishments of sins (CCC. 1472)

"To understand this doctrine and practice of the Church, it is necessary to understand that sin has a double consequence. Grave sin deprives us of communion with God and therefore makes us incapable of eternal life, the privation of which is called the "eternal punishment" of sin. On the other hand, every sin, even venial, entails an unhealthy attachment to creatures, which must be purified either here on earth, or after death in the state called Purgatory. This purification frees one from what is called the "temporal punishment" of sin. These two punishments must not be conceived of as a kind of vengeance inflicted by God from without, but as following from the very nature of sin. A conversion which proceeds from a fervent charity can attain the complete purification of the sinner in such a way that no punishment would remain."

So the church affirms that there is a provision to get rid of punishment as is mentioned in the last part of the above article. Rom. 8:1 also quotes that, "Therefore there is no punishment for all those who believe in Jesus Christ."

Every sinful action has its own proportionate reaction. But if someone believes in Christ Jesus this reaction will be transferred to the body of Christ. Christ becomes a substitute for the sinner/believer. This is the reason that there is no punishment for all those who believe in Christ Jesus. To believe in Christ Jesus means to practice what Jesus and his apostles teach in the Bible

and through the magisterium. If a person practices and lives according to the message of Christ, norms of the Word of God and magisterial teachings then that one will not experience the consequence of the wrong action.

God's love is perfect. God's love will take away all types of fear because there is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear (1 Jn. 4:18). One has no need to fear any punishment but need only possess reverential fear of God.

II. How to love God?

For if one loves God all things will be turned for one's favour. (Rom. 8:28). The following steps are required of a one who wants to love God.

1. Keep the commandments - "All those who love God; must keep all the commandments of God" (1Jn. 5:3). Jesus said, "If you love me you will keep all my commandments" (Jn. 14:15).
2. Love your enemies 1Jn. 4:20 states that those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they see, cannot love God whom they have not seen and verse 21 adds that "the commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also."
3. Love the Church (Acts. 9:4) - Do not persecute the Church but love and foster the infrastructure of the Church. Without loving the Church nobody can love God. Col. 1:24 states that the Church is the body of Christ. All those who believe in Jesus, form the body of Christ. Therefore, one must love all Christian denominations. Some of the Christian denominations may have full communion and others might have only partial communion with the Mother Church, yet one must consider all those who believe in Christ as brothers and sisters (CCCc. 163).
4. Spend quality time every day in prayer - Prayer is a relationship with God. "Prayer is the raising of one's mind and heart to God, or the petition of good things from him in accord with his will. It is always the gift of God who comes to encounter man. Christian prayer is the personal and living relationship of the children of God with their Father who is infinitely good, with his Son Jesus Christ, and with the Holy
5. Spirit who dwells in their hearts"(CCCc. 534). Prayer is a conscious, constant, conversation with God that will result in an intimate relationship with the Almighty. To establish this relationship and grow in this relationship one must do the daily prayers and the Homework very sincerely from Pages 97-112 of the Logos prayer book named "Infilling, healing and deliverance." (You can also download this book from www.frjosevettiyankal.org)

III. Benefits of the Love God

If you love God following are the benefits

Jesus gives 8 Blessings, 8 Authorities and 8 Grades of Relationship

	8 Blessings (Rom. 8:28)	8 Authorities	8 Grades of Relationship
1.	Physical Healing - 1Pt. 2:24 and Mt. 8. 3	Authority over quality Jn. 2:10	Followers - Mt. 4:23 - 25
2.	Spiritual Healing- Lk. 7:49 and Jn. 8:11	Authority over distance - Jn. 4:51	Disciples - Lk. 10:1
3.	Emotional Healing - Inner Healing. Ps. 34:18 and Is. 43:5	Authority over past sickness - Jn. 5:5-8	Apostles - Mt. 10:1 - 2 and Mk. 3:13 - 14
4.	Family Healing- Acts. 16:31 and Lk. 19:9	Authority over number - Jn. 6:11 - 13	Friends, brothers and sisters – Jn. 15:16 and Jn. 20:17
5.	Financial Healing - 2Cor. 8:9 and 2Cor. 9:8	Authority over nature - Jn. 6:19 Walking over water	Co-workers - 1Cor. 3:9
6.	Deliverance from the dominion of the devil and demons - Lk. 13:16 and Rom. 16:20	Authority over Sin Jn. 8: 11	Ambassadors - 2Cor. 5:20
7.	Anointing- To receive Charisms, Fruits and Gifts of the Holy Spirit, to build up the church, to witness Christ and grow in spiritual Life - Mt. 3:11, Lk. 24:49 and Jn. 14:16	Authority over birth defect Jn. 9:1-2	Substitutes of Christ - Gal 2:20
8.	Power to witness Christ - Acts. 1:8	Authority over death - Jn.11:43 - 44 - "Lazarus come out"! He came out.	Relationships like vine & branches, shepherd & sheep, bridegroom and bride - In Jn.15: 5, Jn. 10:16, 2Cor. 11:2.

IV. Three Categories of People might not be healed or relieved immediately.

1. For those whose time of death has come. Death is predestined by God even before birth or before doing something good or bad (Ps. 139:16). Such people whose time of death has come, might not be healed. For them the sickness is only a preparation for their death and eternal life.
2. Holy Souls who enjoy wonderful charisms, revelations and great joy in their sickness - They are called to challenge the devil and defeat the devil (2 Cor. 12:9). They might not be healed as St. Theresa of Child Jesus, St. Alphonsa of Kerala and others of the like were not.
3. People who are in danger of losing their eternal life might not be healed immediately. As Jesus said, "If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life maimed or lame than to have two hands or two feet and to be thrown into the eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into the hell of fire" (Mt. 18:8-9).

Those of whose faith has to be increased -such ones might also be not healed soon. The man with the epileptic son prayed, "Lord increase my faith. And help my poor faith" (Mk. 9:24). Just after that prayer, his son was healed because Jesus increased his faith as he had asked. And those who have a special call to receive powerful charisms in order to have a special ministry in the Church might not be healed. (1Pt. 4: 12-14)

These people who are mentioned above have supernatural healings but natural healings might not take place in their lives. But the total of these three categories of people would be less than 1% of the total praying population.

V. You are in the perfect plan of God

1. Plan of God is welfare and wellness Jeremiah 29:11 -'I have a plan for you, it is a plan of welfare' and CCC.1 reveals that God has created you not to suffer but to share a blessed life with God; CCCC.57 quotes that "...directly or indirectly God is in no way the cause of your suffering or evil in this world."
2. Satan too has a plan for you, that is just contrary to the plan of God (Col. 2:14-15) - What is written is written; what is erased is erased - The plan of the devil can be erased only through the blood of Christ.
3. Both these plans were written at the time of your birth - before you did anything - either good or bad (Mt. 13:24-30).

4. God needs your consent and co-operation to execute His plans. Whereas Satan executes his plans without your consent and co- operation because he does not respect your freedom of choice. He is a thief as Jesus said (Jn. 10:10).
5. Therefore, you are in need of a good antivirus (as it were) programme to destroy the plans of the devil. That anti-virus programme is your daily prayers and Home Work (pp. 97-111). Without Jesus, you cannot gain victory over Satan, because Jesus has come to this world to undo what the devil has done in you and in me (1Jn. 3:8).
6. This victory in the world would be of four types as the Catholic Church brief sin CCCc. 314 - victory over sin, sickness, satan and death. This is the perfect plan of God.

What to do when you are sick?

1. Personal Prayer - Please do personal prayer daily. Is. 38:1 - 6 relates that the personal prayer of Hezekiah was answered and he was healed as he was at the point of death.
2. Prayer of the Pastor - Please seek the prayer of the pastor who has the gift of healing (Ex. 20:17).
3. Medicine - Please consult a doctor and take medicine if needed (Sir. 38:1-14).
4. Word of God - Please continue to listen to the Word of God for a considerable time on a daily basis or at least once in a week, as long as your sickness exists. And also try to live according to the norms of the Word of God.

VI. Healing Ministry of the Church

Youcat 250 "A Catholic Priest who administers the sacraments acts not on the basis of his own power or moral perfection (which unfortunately he often lacks), but rather "in persona Christi". Through his ordination, the transforming, healing, saving power of Christ is grafted onto him. Because a priest has nothing of his own, he is above all a servant. The distinguishing characteristic of every authentic priest, therefore, is humble astonishment at his own vocation."

God is not directly or indirectly the cause of evil (including all sufferings and sickness) in this world (CCCc. 57 and CCCc. 72 and GS. 13)

According to the magisterial teaching of the Church, God is not directly or indirectly the author of sickness and sufferings. But it is only the consequence of original sin (CCC. 1521). Though Jesus has canceled the effect of the original sin, certain temporal consequences of the original sin remain even after baptism (CCC. 1264 and CCC. 148). So, one is in need of Jesus on a daily basis to overcome the temporal consequences of original sin. For, there is a definite possibility of being completely healed of all sicknesses and freed from all suffering in Christ Jesus.

Mind of Christ: Healing of all diseases is the mind of Christ (Mt. 8:1-4-'I will to heal you, be healed' said Jesus to the leper). 'This sickness is not unto death but for the glory of God' (Jn. 9:1 - 2), said he. Sickness does not bring glory but healing does. If sickness is for the glory of God Jesus would not have healed him, but he healed and brought forth the glory of God. Jesus gave and still gives this healing power to his disciples and believers (Mt. 10:1 and Mk. 16-17-18). CCC. 1508 - To some God has given the gift of healing and to all priests this gift is granted at the instance of ordination (Youcat 250). Everyone should have the mind of Christ (Phil. 2:4-5). We have the mind of Christ (1Cor. 2:16). St. Paul says 'we have the mind of Christ.'

CCCC. 314. What is the significance of Jesus' compassion for the sick?

1503-1505

The compassion of Jesus toward the sick and his many healings of the infirm were a clear sign that with him had come the Kingdom of God and therefore victory over sin, over suffering, and over death. By his own passion and death he gave new meaning to our suffering which, when united with his own, can become a means of purification and of salvation for us and for others.

Mind of the Church: 852 - Cordova Council in Spain said "no one should opt for martyrdom." Option for martyrdom is the last option if there is no other means to live without giving up the faith. Do not die for Christ but live for Christ. Do not cry for Christ but cry for you and your children. (Lk. 23:27 - 28). St. John Capistrano (1386 AD -1456 AD), An Italian Franciscan priest preached the Word of God and many were healed of incurable diseases. Sometimes, 126,000 people would come to listen to his proclamation of the Word of God and to be healed.

CCCC. 315. What is the attitude of the Church towards the sick?

CCC.1506-1513+1526-1527

Having received from the Lord the charge to heal the sick, the Church strives to carry it out by taking care of the sick and accompanying them with her prayer of intercession. Above all, the Church possesses a sacrament specifically intended for the benefit of the sick. This sacrament was instituted by Christ and is attested by Saint James: "Is anyone among *you* sick? Let him call in the presbyters of the Church and let them pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord" (Js. 5:14-15).

Sickness is the temporal consequence of original sin (CCC. 1521) which is not canceled by baptism (CCC. 1264). Sickness is to be healed by repentance, reconciliation, faith in Christ Jesus, grace through sacraments and prayer (Personal and Common). Therefore, preaching the word of God is a process of healing which leads towards repentance and reconciliation with God and man that will culminate in the Eucharistic communion (Pope Benedict XVI - Healing message on 20th world healing day on February 11, 2012). Destruction materialized through listening to Satan and giving him consent therefore restoration must also materialize through

hearing the preaching of the Word of God and giving consent. Heb. 4:7-'God prepared today to listen and do not harden your heart'. While listening to the Word of God and giving consent to it, one is healed and restored. Above all, the Church has two sacraments for healing and they are confession and anointing of the sick (CCCc. 295).

How can we participate in the sufferings of Christ?

We can participate in the cross of Jesus through certain actions which can be presented as the acronym - REPST.

What is REPST? R= Responsibilities, E = Evangelization works, P = Persecution, S = Self-denial, Self-Purification and Service to Humanity, and T = Temptations.

R - Responsibility related to our duty and mission. When we execute this responsibility there is suffering involved in it. Eg., A mother has to suffer much for the child, similarly, children have to suffer much for their aged parents.

E - Evangelization or Works of Evangelization and the results of it. All pain, tensions and sufferings that we undergo on account of witnessing Christ to our neighbour and the whole world become a Cross.

P - Persecutions that come our way because we witness Christ and his teachings. Some people may not agree with us on the ways of Christ and His Church. Due to this they may persecute us. Enduring all those persecutions is carrying the Cross of Jesus.

S - Self-denial, self-sanctification and service to humanity too form part of the Cross of Christ.

T - Temptations come every day to all of us. It may be to run away from our morals or temptations to do unjust things and sometimes even to deny Jesus for personal motives and profits.

All these are considered as the cross of Jesus that we can carry every day for the salvation of the world and all humanity. Rest of our sufferings due to mental or physical sickness, poverty, exploitation, deprivations and so on are not considered as the cross of Jesus. They are not God given, but God allowed sufferings according to the magisterial teachings in CCC. 2448, CCCc. 57, 58 and if it is allowed by God, then God has given remedies too.

What is the Cross of Jesus?

According to CCC. 618, Jesus carried the cross to forgive the sins, heal the sick, cast out demons, to give the Holy Spirit, eternal life etc. Mother Mary and Simon carried the cross of Jesus by helping Jesus to accomplish his mission. These two persons are the best examples of carrying the cross of Jesus. But Mary and Simon were not bedridden with any disease just to cooperate with the suffering or cross of Jesus. But they were healthy while they carried the cross of Jesus. This shows that carrying the cross means just to cooperate with Jesus, right now, to fulfil the saving mission of Jesus of salvation of souls, redemption of humanity, healing and

deliverance of all. The purpose of the cross of Jesus is for the salvation of souls, healing, redemption, deliverance and so on for all human beings.

How can we participate in the Cross of Jesus?

All those who deny their personal comfort, assets, material gain due to their ministry of preaching the Word of God through media and other means; conducting healing services and working in the hospitals; doing social work; giving education to all; engaging themselves in deliverance ministry and conducting anointing sessions are continuing the mission of Jesus. Through these they carry the Cross of Jesus. Jesus carried the Cross for the salvation of the world. Therefore, whoever carries the Cross of Jesus, stands for the salvation and redemption of the world.

Meaning of Carrying the Daily Cross - Mt. 16:24

Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (Mt. 16:24). Jesus calls us to deny our own concept and ideas and live a life according to the concepts and ideas given by Jesus. Self-denial means denying one's own concepts and ideas that one cherishes in one's heart as something precious. Carrying the cross means taking up the mission of Jesus and executing it even in adverse situations. The mission of Jesus includes four elements in it: First proclamation of the kingdom of God, secondly healing of all the sick; thirdly casting out demons and lastly empowering the people with the power of the Holy Spirit. All those who are in the ministry of proclamation, deliverance, healing and anointing are carrying the cross of Jesus, daily.

Jesus considered suffering as a Baptism for the redemption of humanity. St. Paul considered suffering as a means of revelation from God and manifestation of the power of the risen Christ in him (2 Cor. 9:12). All sufferings will be turned for the good of those who love God (Rom. 8:28). God is no way directly or indirectly the cause of suffering (CCCC. 57). In the original plan of God, Man should not suffer or die (CCCc.72). Suffering, death, powerlessness, ignorance, concupiscence are the consequences of original sin (CCC. 418). Suffering, death, ignorance, character weakness and concupiscence are the temporal punishments of the original sin which are not cancelled by baptism (CCC. 1264). Suffering is a consequence of original sin (CCC. 1521). Many of the human sufferings are not from God, the good Creator. By faith in Christ Jesus and grace from God along with sincere prayers anyone can be set free from the bondage of suffering (GS 13). The compassion of Jesus was such that he took human suffering upon his body and set humanity free from suffering (CCC. 2248). All those who believe in Him can personally attain freedom from suffering. God never gives suffering but allows it (CCC. 311). Freedom of choice is the origin of evil. God will change all our sufferings for our favour and for the glory of God through our request and patient endurance with the suffering Lord (CCC. 312). But nobody can overrule the vicarious aspect of the Kingdom of God (CCCC. 314). Then suffering can be a means of self-purification and means of salvation for oneself and others (Col

1:24).

Human Misery in all its forms including sickness is the temporal consequences (not eternal consequences) of the original sin (CCC. 2448) and it is not cancelled by baptism (CCC. 1264) or by the death of Christ but yet has to be defeated or overcome by personal faith in Christ Jesus and the receipt of grace through sacraments and prayer. This provision to overcome or defeat has already been created by the death of Jesus. Original sin resulted through the misuse of human freedom and consent given to the temptation of the devil. God gives freedom to all CCC. 1730 and He respects it because God does not want slaves but free human beings to love Him and serve Him with freedom of choice. 'I am standing at the door knocking if you open it, I will come and eat with you and you will be with me'(Rev. 3:20). To open the door of the heart or close it is each one's personal choice. Ephesians 2:8 - Salvation is a free gift of God received through faith and by grace.

Faith comes from listening to the word of God(Rom. 10:17). Youcat 21 explains 7 elements of faith.

Grace comes through Sacraments (CCCc.146). What is grace? Grace is defined in the Catechism as assistance from God and also there are 4 types of Grace (CCC.2824).

How does one grow in grace? 2 Pt. 1: 2 says by knowing Christ and his father we grow in grace and peace.

Prayer is a relationship with God which involves personal consent (CCCc. 534).

Human miseries affect all people but are not manifested always. Through the precipitating causes human miseries can be manifested.

Following are some of the precipitating causes:

1. Random selection of the devil - Book of Job is the best example of the random selection of the devil as a cause of human suffering (Job. 1:12). Under what authority does the devil take advantage of random selection? CCC. 407 specifies that the devil got acquired right to torment the people through the consent and disobedience of Adam and Eve.

2. Black Magic - Gal.3:1 and CCC. 2116-2117 say that black magic, sorcery, superstitions and others are also the precipitating causes of the dominion of the devil in humanity.

3. Personal wrong decisions and actions (sins) through human consent - Jesus warns in Lk. 13:1-5 'If you do not repent you will perish'. CCC. 1472 remarks that there is wrong reaction to wrong actions in all of humanity.

4. Sins of other people, personal or social sins, mortal sins and others are also considered as the precipitating causes of miseries in humanity.

One can also retain the miseries in one's life. But by faith, grace and prayer it will be turned for one's favour. One can also ask for equivalent charisms or more powerful gifts as a substitute.

Then it will become a means of salvation for others.

There are some blessings attached to persisting in miseries.

1. In the suffering of St. Paul (2 Cor.12:9), joy and power of God were manifested.
2. CCCc. 314 quotes self-purification, salvation for oneself and others as the positive aspects of suffering.

These are some of the blessings in human sufferings. One can also receive these gifts without retaining miseries. Offering the suffering of Jesus for the redemption of the people through the divine mercy chaplet; yet not our tears and sufferings but the body, blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ while praying the chaplet results in healing of the sick.

To defeat the misery or retain is a personal choice for God will not show any partiality - (Acts 10:34).

God does not compel anyone to do something. God always respects human freedom. Therefore, without the consent of a person even God will not demand that he/she retain the temporal consequence of the original sin. But God has his own time to do things in a person's life. One must wait patiently for His time (1Pt. 5:6-7). In His time all things will be turned for be turned for one's favour (Rom. 8:28). But one must love God as it is written in Dt. 6:5. Human beings must believe in Christ not for these worldly things alone but for eternal life too (1Cor. 15:19).

The first healing service in the bible: Genesis 20: 7-17 - God said to King Abimelech - 'Return his wife if not you will die. Abraham will pray' declared God - he prayed and God healed everybody. Why does God ask someone to heal somebody? Only God knows .A community of love can be built through the healing ministry. Mutual love, respect and mutual dependence will be fostered through. 'My God and me' attitude is not good. People need one another. God wants to see humanity as a community of love. Sometimes one will not be healed without being prayed over by a person who has the gift of healing.

VII. Healing verses from the bible.

Please repeat these verses or other similar verses in the Bible several times when you are sick. There is a possibility of getting complete healing through the repetition of the Word of God. How many times to repeat the Word? As much as one can or wants.

1. 1 Pt. 2:24

He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

2. Mt. 8:16-17

¹⁶ That evening they brought to him many who were possessed with demons; and he cast out the

spirits with a word, and cured all who were sick.

¹⁷ This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah, "He took our infirmities and bore our diseases."

3. Jn. 16:20

Very truly, I tell you, you will weep and mourn, but the world will rejoice; you will have pain, but your pain will turn into joy.

4. Ps. 22:14

When Jesus died on the Cross he was poured out like water, and all his bones were out of joints; his heart was poured out like water; all his internal organs were melted like wax;

5. Is. 53:6

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

6. Lk. 4:18

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free..."

7. Mk. 16:17

And these signs will accompany those who believe: by using my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues

8. Mt. 10:8

Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment. 9. Ex. 15:26- I am the Lord who heals you. He said, "If you will listen carefully to the voice of the LORD your God, and do what is right in his sight, and give heed to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will not bring upon you any of the diseases that I brought upon the Egyptians; for I am the LORD who heals you."

10. Ps. 107:20

He sent out his word and healed them, and delivered them from destruction.

11. Wis. 16:12

Neither herbs nor medicine heals me but O' Lord your words heals me.

12. Mt. 14:14

He had compassion for them, therefore He healed everybody. Jesus has compassion for me. So He heals me right now.

VIII. 6 Areas of healings

The redemption of Jesus begets healing of body, mind, soul, family, finance and injuries inflicted through diabolical interactions.

IX. 6 Types of healings

1. Instant Healing - Mt. 8:1-4 - Jesus touched and prayed over a leper and he was healed instantly.
2. Progressive Healing - Mk. 8:22-24 - Jesus prayed two times over a blind man and in the first instance of prayer he got partial healing and the second instance of prayer that blind man was healed fully. Lk. 17:10-17 Ten Lepers are healed on the way to the priest. This is also another example of progressive healing. Many times, the healing process might have already started during the retreat but might not be manifested immediately in its entirety. It is generally manifested on a later occasion of prayer or treatment.
3. Distant Healing - Jn. 4:51 and Mt. 15:21 - 27 - Centurion's son and daughter of a Cannanite woman were healed at a distance. This is also called healing in proxy.
4. When I was preaching in St Francis Xavier's Cathedral in Bangalore during the Lenten season, one man named Rebello came and told me, "My daughter who is in Washinton D.C. USA is suffering from deafness in one of her ears." I asked him to attend the retreat in proxy for his daughter. During the time of proclamation of the Word of God, he prayed for his daughter. He then got a phone call from USA and his daughter Priya told him, "My deaf ear is healed and my hearing is restored now." This is an example of distant healing or healing in proxy.
5. Gift of joyful suffering - In Jn. 16:20 Jesus relates that a pregnant woman is in distress until her delivery. After the delivery, Jesus remarks that she will not remember her birth pangs and ignore her past sufferings seeing the face of the new child. She rejoices at the birth of her child and thereafter. This pregnant woman, as Jesus remarks has the gift of joyful suffering in view of future joy and gains. Gift of immunity - Some people receive the gift of immunity so that their bodies expel germs of diseases or grow healthier in order to experience progressive healing and good health.
6. Delegated healing - One lady in Bangalore, Christine Gonsalves came and asked me to go along with her to St. John's Medical College to pray for the healing of her husband, who was in the ICU on the ventilator after two major heart attacks. I made a sign of the cross on her right palm and asked her to go and place her hand on her husband and pray. She did it and her husband was healed. After six days he was discharged from the hospital (Refer the testimony section at the end of this book). Jesus delegated his healing

powers to his disciples, "Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment" (Mt. 10:8).

X. How did Jesus and the Apostles heal the sick? (Means of Healings)

1. Used the Word Mt. 8: 16- Use the word to bring healing and Deliverance.
2. Laid hands - Mk. 6:5-Jesus laid his hand and healed the sick
3. Used saliva - Mk.8:23- Jesus spat in his eyes....
4. Mix of saliva, mud, water used - Jn. 9:6-7
5. Used oil Mk. 6:13 - They applied oil to heal the sick
6. Shadow of Peter healed - Acts. 5:15-16
7. Kerchief that touched the body of St. Paul healed - Acts.19:12

XI. There are more than 10 Sources of Healings and Blessings in the Catholic Church. Use of these 10 sources frequently would bring about healing.

1. God - Ex. 15:26 - I am the God who heals you. Medicine might fail but God never fails - One woman who had been suffering for 12 years of bleeding, though she spent all her money, did not receive any healing but Jesus healed her (Lk. 8:43 - 44).
2. The Word of God heals all diseases - Ps. 107:20 says, "He sent out his word and healed them, and delivered them from destruction".
3. Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament heals the sick (CCC. 1509). "Heal the sick... the Church has received this charge from the Lord and strives to carry it out by taking care of the sick as well as by accompanying them with her prayer of intercession. She believes in the life-giving presence of Christ, the physician of souls and bodies. This presence is particularly active through the sacraments, and in an altogether special way through the Eucharist, the bread that gives eternal life and that St. Paul suggests is connected with bodily health".
4. Some persons function as Healers (CCC. 1508).

"The Holy Spirit gives to some a special charism of healing, so as to make manifest the power of the grace of the risen Lord. But even the most intense prayers do not always obtain the healing of all illnesses. Thus St. Paul must have learnt from the Lord that "my grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness," and that the sufferings endured could mean that "in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's

afflictions for the sake of his Body, that is, the Church".

5. Saints, Relics and blessed objects have the power to heal the sick. (LG. 11). Novena prayers and intercession to saints too have the power to heal the sick.
6. The intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary especially in Velankanni, Lourdes and other Marian centers around the world are sources of healing. The Marian Rosary also heals many.
7. Pilgrim centers and certain other selective places also share the healing power of God (e.g. Jn. 5- Pool at Bethesda and others).
8. Medicine, Doctors, surgery and others heal. "The Lord created medicines out of the earth, and the sensible will not despise them." (Sir. 38:4)"... he gave skill to human beings that he might be glorified in his marvelous works. By them the physician heals and takes away pain; the pharmacist makes a mixture from them. God's works will never be finished; and from him health spreads over all the earth" (Sir. 38: 6-8).
9. Our prayers and acts of faith have the power to heal our diseases. "Jesus prayed over him and applied saliva, water and mud to heal the sick and asked him to go wash." The blind man was healed after doing all these acts (Mk. 8:22-24).
10. All 7 Sacraments, especially Confession and Eucharist have the power to heal almost all diseases. CCCc. 295 mentions that confession and last sacraments are sacraments of healings.

Please make use of all these provisions which God has arranged in the Church and in the world to heal! And do all the Daily Prayers and Homework from the Logos prayer book (pp 97-111) to establish a wonderful relationship with Jesus, to grow spiritually and to receive all blessings, all authorities and enjoy all grades of relationship with the Lord.

XII. STEPS FOR SALVATION, HEALING AND DELIVERANCE

1. Believe in the name of Jesus Christ. (Acts. 3:16). Salvation and forgiveness of sin is only through Jesus Christ. (Col.1:14). Mt. 13:58- He could not do many miracles because of their unbelief.
2. Seek first the Kingdom of God and healing will be added to you. (Mt. 6:33). To seek the Kingdom of God first, means to live in accordance with the teachings of the Bible. Kingdom of God means Romans 14:17. That is life in the Holy Spirit.
3. Forgive your enemies and pray for their welfare. (Mt. 6:14; Mk. 11:25; Eph.4:32).

4. Please do some work of evangelization. Healing is for evangelization. Evangelization means spreading the good news and bringing people to Jesus Christ (Mt. 8:14 - 15) and introducing Jesus Christ to others who are suffering like one's own self.
5. Surrender everything, all problems and sickness to Jesus (Mt. 11:28). Be in the physical presence of Christ by person or by proxy. All those who came to Him by person or proxy were healed. The healing minister can stand in proxy for all who are present for the service. You can also remain in proxy for somebody who is not present in the healing service.
6. Pray for other people who have similar problems and sickness (1Tim. 2:1-3). Pray for at least ten people.
7. Renew your life. As your hearts have been disposed to stray from God, turn now, ten times more to seek Him. For He who has brought disaster upon you, will, in saving you, bring you back enduring joy (Bar. 4:28-29).
8. Put away the old self of your former way of life, corrupted through deceitful desires and be renewed in the Spirit of your minds and put on the new self, created in God in righteousness and holiness of truth (Eph.4:22-24).
9. God will not listen to the prayers of a sinner (Jn. 9:31). Be a forgiven sinner, then prayers will be answered. The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, God wants to reconstruct His temple. If His temple has been destroyed by sickness or accidents, God has sent Jesus Christ our healer to heal because healing is the plan of God.
10. Use the ten sources of healings. There are ten sources as mentioned above in XI.

These are also like the Ten Pools of Bethzatha. Formerly, there was one pool at Bethzatha (Jn. 5:1-18). Today this pool is almost dried- up but Jesus has given us ten pools to be healed in.

Give thanks for everything, even for negative experiences. This is the will of God (1 Thes. 5:16 - 18).

XIII. HOW TO PRAY FOR HEALING

Before we pray for healing, we must repent and forsake all sin. *"Some were sick through their sinful ways, and because of their iniquities endured affliction"* (Psalms 107:17). We must accept Jesus as Lord and Savior. We should not have hatred or resentment towards anyone. We must believe that Jesus will heal us. Then if we pray, 'Jesus, deliver me from this disease,' he will surely heal us.

Jesus has compassion for us. *"When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick"* (Mt. 14:14). The sick must come into the presence of Jesus to receive healing. The Lord says *"I am the Lord who heals you"* (Ex.15:26). Right now God heals us through the Word, through Prayer and through the Holy Eucharist. These are three ways available during healing adoration. There were many sick people when Jesus lived on the earth. But He healed those who came to him. He healed some others through their representatives.

XIV DOCUMENT ON HEALING PRAYERS.

"...because sickness, like other forms of human suffering, is a privileged moment for prayer, whether asking for grace, or for the ability to accept sickness in a spirit of faith and conformity to God's will, or also for asking for healing." (Instruction - Healing prayers - Introduction)

Not only is it praiseworthy for individual members of the faithful to ask for healing for themselves and for others, but Church herself asks the Lord for the health of the sick in her liturgy... through anointing of the sick and mass for the sick (Instruction Healing prayers 2)

The Fathers of the Church considered it normal that believers would ask God not only for the health of their soul, but also for that of their body. With regard to the goods of life, health, and physical integrity, St. Augustine writes: <<We need to pray that these are retained, when we have them, and that they are increased, when we do not have them.>> St. Augustine has also left us the testimony of a friend's healing, obtained through the prayers of a Bishop, a priest, and some deacons in his house. (*De Civitate Dei* 22, 8,3 (=PL41,762-763).

ROMAN DOCUMENT ON HEALING PRAYERS ISSUED BY THE CDF

Cardinal Ratzinger when he was the prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, he issued a document on healing mass and healing services in the Church. This is the document.

INSTRUCTION ON PRAYERS FOR HEALING

INTRODUCTION

The longing for happiness, deeply rooted in the human heart, has always been accompanied by a desire to be freed from illness and to be able to understand the meaning of sickness when it is experienced. This is a human phenomenon, which in some way concerns every person and finds particular resonance in the Church, where sickness is understood as a means of union with Christ and of spiritual purification. Moreover, for those who find themselves in the presence of a sick person, it is an occasion for the exercise of charity. But this is not all, because sickness, like other forms of human suffering, is a privileged moment for prayer, whether asking for grace, or for the ability to accept sickness in a spirit of faith and conformity to God's will, or also for asking for healing.

Prayer for the restoration of health is therefore part of the Church's experience in every age, including our own. What in some ways is new is the proliferation of prayer meetings, at times combined with liturgical celebrations, for the purpose of obtaining healing from God. In many cases, the occurrence of healings has been proclaimed, giving rise to the expectation of the same phenomenon in other such gatherings. In the same context, appeal is sometimes made to a claimed charism of healing.

These prayer meetings for obtaining healing present the question of their proper discernment from a liturgical perspective; this is the particular responsibility of the Church's authorities, who are to watch over and give appropriate norms for the proper functioning of liturgical celebrations.

It has seemed opportune, therefore, to publish an Instruction, in accordance with canon 34 of the Code of Canon Law, above all as a help to local Ordinaries so that the faithful may be better guided in this area, though promoting what is good and correcting what is to be avoided. It was necessary, however, that such disciplinary determinations be given their point of reference within a well-founded doctrinal framework, to ensure the correct approach and to make clear the reasoning behind the norms. To this end, it has been judged appropriate to preface the disciplinary part of the Instruction with a doctrinal note.

I. DOCTRINAL ASPECTS

*1. **Sickness and healing:** their meaning and value in the economy of salvation*

People are called to joy. Nevertheless each day they experience many forms of suffering and pain.» (1) Therefore, the Lord, in his promises of redemption, announces the joy of the heart that comes from liberation from sufferings (cf. *Is.* 30:29; 35:10; *Bar.* 4:29). Indeed, he is the one «who delivers from every evil» (*Wis.* 16:8). Among the different forms of suffering, those which accompany illness are continually present in human history. They are also the object of man's deep desire to be delivered from every evil.

In the Old Testament, «it is the experience of Israel that illness is mysteriously linked to sin and evil.» (2) Among the punishments threatened by God for the people's unfaithfulness, sickness has a prominent place (cf. *Dt.* 28:21 - 22, 27-29, 35). The sick person who beseeches God for healing confesses to have been justly punished for his sins (cf. *Ps.* 37; 40; 106:17-21).

Sickness, however, also strikes the just, and people wonder why. In the Book of Job, this question occupies many pages. «While it is true that suffering has meaning as punishment, when it is connected with a fault, it is not true that all suffering is a consequence of a fault and has the nature of a punishment. The figure of the just man Job is a special proof of this in the Old Testament... And if the Lord consents to test Job with suffering, he does it to demonstrate the latter's righteousness. The suffering has the character of a test.» (3)

Although sickness may have positive consequences as a demonstration of the faithfulness of the just person, and for repairing the justice that is violated by sin, and also because it may cause a

sinner to reform and set out on the way of conversion, it remains, however, an evil. For this reason, the prophet announces the future times in which there will be no more disease and infirmity, and the course of life will no longer be broken by death (cf. *Is.* 35:5-6; 65: 19-20).

It is in the New Testament, however, that the question of why illness also afflicts the just finds a complete answer. In the public activity of Jesus, his encounters with the sick are not isolated, but continual. He healed many through miracles, so that miraculous healings characterised his activity: «Jesus went around to all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the Gospel of the kingdom, and curing every disease and illness» (*Mt.* 9:35; cf. 4:23). These healings are signs of his messianic mission (cf. *Lk.* 7:20-23). They manifest the victory of the kingdom of God over every kind of evil, and become the symbol of the restoration to health of the whole human person, body and soul. They serve to demonstrate that Jesus has the power to forgive sins (cf. *Mk.* 2:1 - 12); they are signs of the salvific goods, as is the healing of the paralytic of Bethesda (cf. *Jn* 5:2-9, 19-21) and the man born blind (cf. *Jn.* 9).

The first preaching of the Gospel, as recounted in the New Testament, was accompanied by numerous miraculous healings that corroborated the power of the Gospel proclamation. This had been the promise of the Risen Jesus, and the first Christian communities witnessed its realization in their midst: «These signs will accompany those who believe: ...they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover» (*Mk.* 16:17-18). The preaching of Philip in Samaria was accompanied by miraculous healings: «Philip went down to a city of Samaria and proclaimed the Christ to them. With one accord, the crowds paid attention to what was said by Philip when they heard it and saw the signs he was doing. For unclean spirits, crying out in a loud voice, came out of many possessed people, and many paralyzed and crippled people were cured» (*Acts* 8:5-7). Saint Paul describes his own proclamation of the Gospel as characterized by signs and wonders worked by the power of the Holy Spirit: «For I will not dare to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to lead the Gentiles to obedience by word and deed, by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit» (*Rom* 15:18-19; cf. *I Thes.* 1:5; *I Cor.* 2:4-5). It would not be without foundation to suppose that these signs and wonders, manifestations of the power of God that accompanied the preaching of the Gospel, were constituted in large part by miraculous healings. Such wonders were not limited to St. Paul's ministry, but were also occurring among the faithful: «Does then the one who supplies the Spirit to you and works mighty deeds among you do so from works of the law or from faith in what you have heard preached?» (*Gal.* 3:5).

The messianic victory over sickness, as over other human sufferings, does not happen only by its elimination through miraculous healing, but also through the voluntary and innocent suffering of Christ in his passion, which gives every person the ability to unite himself to the sufferings of the Lord. In fact, «Christ himself, though without sin, suffered in his passion pains and torments of every type, and made his own the sorrows of all men: thus he brought to fulfilment what had been written of him by the prophet Isaiah (cf. *Is.* 53:4-5). (4)» But there is more: «In the cross of

Christ not only is the redemption accomplished through suffering, but also human suffering itself has been redeemed... In bringing about the redemption through suffering, Christ has also raised human suffering to the level of the redemption. Thus each man in his suffering can also become a sharer in the redemptive suffering of Christ.» (5)

The Church welcomes the sick not only as the recipients of her loving care, but also by recognizing that they are called «to live their human and Christian vocation and to participate in the growth of the kingdom of God in a new and more valuable manner. The words of the Apostle Paul ought to become their approach to life or, better yet, cast an illumination to permit them to see the meaning of grace in their very situation: 'In my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the Church' (*Col.* 1:24). Precisely in arriving at this realization, the Apostle is raised up in joy: 'I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake' (*Col.* 1:24). (6)» It is a paschal joy, fruit of the Holy Spirit, and, like Saint Paul, «in the same way many of the sick can become bearers of the 'joy inspired by the Holy Spirit in much affliction' (1 *Thess.* 1:6) and be witnesses to Jesus' resurrection.»> (7)

2. The desire for healing and prayer to obtain it

Presuming the acceptance of God's will, the sick person's desire for healing is both good and deeply human, especially when it takes the form of a trusting prayer addressed to God. Sirach exhorts his disciple: «My son, when you are ill, delay not, but pray to God, who will heal you» (*Sir.* 38:9). A number of the Psalms also ask for healing (cf. *Ps.* 6; 37; 40; 87).

Large numbers of the sick approached Jesus during his public ministry, either directly or through friends and relatives, seeking the restoration of health. The Lord welcomes their requests and the Gospels contain not even a hint of reproach for these prayers. The Lord's only complaint is about their possible lack of faith: «If you can! Everything is possible to one who has faith» (*Mk.* 9:23; cf. *Mk.* 6:5-6; *Jn.* 4:48).

Not only is it praiseworthy for individual members of the faithful to ask for healing for themselves and for others, but the Church herself asks the Lord for the health of the sick in her liturgy. Above all, there is the sacrament «especially intended to strengthen those who are being tried by illness, the Anointing of the Sick.» (8) «The Church has never ceased to celebrate this sacrament for its members by the anointing and the prayer of its priests, commending those who are ill to the suffering and glorified Lord, that he may raise them up and save them.»> (9) Immediately before the actual anointing takes place, in the blessing of the oil, the Church prays: «Make this oil a remedy for all who are anointed with it; heal them in body, in soul, and in spirit, and deliver them from every affliction» (10) and then, in the first two prayers after the anointing, the healing of the sick person is requested. (11) Since the sacrament is a pledge and promise of the future kingdom, it is also a proclamation of the resurrection, when «there shall be no more death or mourning, crying out or pain, because the old order has passed away» (*Rev.* 21:4). Furthermore, the *Roman Missal* contains a Mass *pro infirmis* in which, in addition to spiritual

graces, the health of the sick is requested. (12)

In the *De benedictionibus* of the *Rituale Romanum*, there is an *Ordo benedictionis infirmorum*, in which there are various prayers for healing: in the second formulary of the *Preces* (13), in the four *Orationes benedictionis pro adultis* (14), in the two *Orationes benedictionis pro pueris* (15), and in the prayer of the *Ritus brevior* (16).

Obviously, recourse to prayer does not exclude, but rather encourages the use of effective natural means for preserving and restoring health, as well as leading the Church's sons and daughters to care for the sick, to assist them in body and spirit, and to seek to cure disease. Indeed, «part of the plan laid out in God's providence is that we should fight strenuously against all sickness and carefully seek the blessings of good health...» (17)

3. The «charism of healing» in the New Testament

Not only did wondrous healings confirm the power of the Gospel proclamation in Apostolic times, but the New Testament refers also to Jesus' real and proper transmission of the power to heal illnesses to his Apostles and to the first preachers of the Gospel. In the call of the Twelve to their first mission, according to the accounts of Matthew and Luke, the Lord gave them «the power to drive out unclean spirits and to cure every disease and illness» (*Mt.* 10:1; cf. *Lk* 9:1), and commanded them: «Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, drive out demons» (*Mt.* 10:8). In sending out the seventy-two disciples, the Lord charges them: «cure the sick» (*Lk.* 10:9). The power to heal, therefore, is given within a missionary context, not for their own exaltation, but to confirm their mission.

The Acts of the Apostles refers in general to the wonders worked by them: «many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles» (cf. *Acts* 2:43; cf. 5:12). These were amazing deeds that manifested the truth and the power of their mission. However, apart from these brief general references, the Acts of the Apostles refers above all to the miraculous healings worked by individual preachers of the Gospel: Stephen (cf. *Acts* 6:8), Philip (cf. *Acts* 8:6-7), and, above all, Peter (cf. *Acts* 3:1-10; 5:15; 9:33-34, 40-41) and Paul (cf. *Acts* 14:3, 8-10; 15:12; 19: 11-12; 20:9-10; 28:8-9).

In the conclusion to the Gospel of Mark, as well as in the Letter to the Galatians, as seen above, the perspective is broadened. The wondrous healings are not limited to the activity of the Apostles and certain of the central figures in the first preaching of the Gospel. In this perspective, the references to the «charisms of healing» in *I Cor.* 12:9, 28,30 acquire special importance. The meaning of *charism* is *per se* quite broad - «a generous gift» - and in this context it refers to «gifts of healing obtained.» These graces, in the plural, are attributed to an individual (cf. *I Cor.* 12:9), and are not, therefore, to be understood in a distributive sense, as the gifts of healing received by those who themselves have been healed, but rather as a gift granted to a person to obtain graces of healing for others. This is given *in uno Spiritu*, but nothing is specified about

how that person obtains these healings. It would not be farfetched to think that it happens by means of prayer, perhaps accompanied by some symbolic gesture.

In the Letter of James, reference is made to the Church's action, by means of the priests, directed toward salvation in a physical sense as well of the sick. But this is not to be understood as a wondrous healing; it is different from the «charisms of healing» of *1 Cor* 12:9. «<Is anyone sick among you? He should call for the priests of the Church and have them pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord and the prayer of faith will save the sick person and will raise him up. If he has committed any sins, he will be forgiven>> (*Jas.* 5:14-15). This refers to a sacramental action: anointing of the sick with oil and prayer «over him» and not simply «for him,» as if it were only a prayer of intercession or petition; it is rather an efficacious action on the sick person. (18) The verbs «will save» and «will raise up» do not suggest an action aimed exclusively or predominantly at physical healing, but in a certain way include it. The first verb, even though the other times it appears in the Letter of James it refers to spiritual salvation (cf. 1:21; 2:14; 4:12; 5:20), is also used in the New Testament in the sense of «to heal» (cf. Mt. 9:21; Mk. 5:28, 34; 6:56; 10:52; Lk. 8:48); the second, while having at times the sense of «to rise» (cf. Mt. 10:8; 11:5; 14:2), is also used to indicate the action of «raising up» a person who is lying down because of illness, by healing the person in a wondrous fashion (cf. Mt. 9:5; Mk. 1:31; 9:27; Acts 3:7).

4. Prayers to obtain healing from God in the Church's tradition.

The Fathers of the Church considered it normal that believers would ask God not only for the health of their soul, but also for that of their body. With regard to the goods of life, health, and physical integrity, St. Augustine writes: «We need to pray that these are retained, when we have them, and that they are increased, when we do not have them.» (19) St. Augustine has also left us the testimony of a friend's healing, obtained through the prayers of a Bishop, a priest, and some deacons in his house.(20)

The same perspective is found in both the Eastern and Western liturgical rites. One of the post Communion prayers of the Roman Missal asks «<...may the power of this heavenly gift take hold of our minds and bodies.>>» (21) In the liturgy of Good Friday, Christians are invited to pray to God the Father Almighty that he «may keep diseases away... and grant health to the sick.» (22) Among the texts that are most significant is that of the blessing of the oil of the sick, in which God is asked to pour forth his holy blessing so that all «<those who are anointed with it may receive healing, in body, soul and spirit, and be delivered from all sadness, all weakness and suffering.>>» (23)

The expressions used in the prayers of the anointing of the sick in the Eastern Rites are very similar. For example, in the anointing of the sick in the Byzantine Rite, there is the prayer: «Holy Father, doctor of souls and bodies, you who sent your only begotten Son Jesus Christ to cure every sickness and to free us from death, heal also your servant from the infirmity of body and

spirit that afflicts him, by the grace of your Christ.» (24) In the Coptic Rite, the Lord is invoked to bless the oil so that all who will be anointed with it will obtain health of spirit and body. Then, during the anointing of the sick person, the priests make mention of Jesus Christ who was sent into the world «to heal all sicknesses and to free from death» and ask God «to heal the sick person of the infirmities of body and to grant him the right path.» (25)

6. The «charism of healing in the present-day contest

In the course of the Church's history there have been holy miracle-workers who have performed wondrous healings. The phenomenon was not limited to the Apostolic period; however, the so-called «charism of healing,» about which it seems appropriate to offer some doctrinal clarifications, does not fall within these phenomena of wonder-working. Instead, the present question concerns special prayer meetings organized for the purpose of obtaining wondrous healings among the sick who are present, or prayers of healing after Eucharistic communion for this same purpose.

There is abundant witness throughout the Church's history to healings connected with places of prayer (sanctuaries, in the presence of the relics of martyrs or other saints and others.). In Antiquity and the Middle Age, such healings contributed to the popularity of pilgrimages to certain sanctuaries, such as that of St. Martin of Tours or the Cathedral of St. James in Compostela, as well as many others. The same also happens today at Lourdes, as it has for more than a century. Such healings, however, do not imply a «charism of healing,» because they are not connected with a person who has such a charism, but they need to be taken into account when we evaluate the above-mentioned prayer meetings from a doctrinal perspective.

With respect to prayer meetings for obtaining healing, an aim which even if not exclusive is at least influential in their planning, it is appropriate to distinguish between meetings connected to a «charism of healing,» whether real or apparent, and those without such a connection. A possible «charism of healing» can be attributed when the intervention of a specific person or persons, or a specific category of persons (for example, the directors of the group that promotes the meetings) is viewed as determinative for the efficacy of the prayer. If there is no connection with any «charism of healing,» then the celebrations provided in the liturgical books, if they are done with respect for liturgical norms, are obviously licit and often appropriate, as in the case of a Mass *pro infirmis*. If the celebrations do not respect liturgical law, they lack legitimacy.

In sanctuaries, other celebrations are held frequently which may not be aimed *per se* at specifically asking God for graces of healing, but in which, in the intentions of the organizers and participants, the obtaining of healing has an important part. With this purpose in mind, both liturgical and non-liturgical services are held: liturgical celebrations (such as exposition of the Blessed Sacrament with Benediction) and non-liturgical expressions of popular piety encouraged by the Church (such as the solemn recitation of the Rosary). These celebrations are legitimate, as long as their authentic sense is not altered. For example, one could not place on the primary level

the desire to obtain the healing of the sick, in a way which might cause Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament to lose its specific finality, which is to <<bring the faithful to recognize in the Eucharist the wonderful presence of Christ and to invite them to a spiritual union with him, a union which finds its culmination in sacramental Communion.>> (26)

The <charism of healing> is not attributable to a specific class of faithful. It is quite clear that St. Paul, when referring to various charisms in *1 Corinthians* 12, does not attribute the gift of <<charisms of healing>> to a particular group, whether apostles, prophets, teachers, those who govern, or any other. The logic which governs the distribution of such gifts is quite different: «All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who distributes to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses» (1 *Cor* 12:11). Consequently, in prayer meetings organized for asking for healing, it would be completely arbitrary to attribute a «charism of healing» to any category of participants, for example, to the directors of the group; the only thing to do is to entrust oneself to the free decision of the Holy Spirit, who grants to some a special charism of healing in order to show the power of the grace of the Risen Christ. Yet not even the most intense prayer obtains the healing of all sicknesses. So it is that St. Paul had to learn from the Lord that «my grace is enough for you; my power is made perfect in weakness» (2 *Cor* 12:9), and that the meaning of the experience of suffering can be that «in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the Church» (*Col* 1:24).

II. DISCIPLINARY NORMS

Art. 1 It is licit for every member of the faithful to pray to God for healing. When this is organized in a church or other sacred place, it is appropriate that such prayers be led by an ordained minister.

Art. 2 - Prayers for healing are considered to be liturgical if they are part of the liturgical books approved by the Church's competent authority; otherwise, they are non-liturgical.

Art. 3 - § 1. Liturgical prayers for healing are celebrated according to the rite prescribed in the *Ordo benedictionis infirmorum* of the *Rituale Romanum*(28) and with the proper sacred vestments indicated therein.

§ 2. In conformity with what is stated in the *Praenotanda, V., De adaptationibus Conferentiae Episcoporum competunt* (29) of the same *Rituale Romanum*, Conferences of Bishops may introduce those adaptations to the Rite of Blessings of the Sick which are held to be pastorally useful or possibly necessary, after prior review by the Apostolic See.

Art. 4 - § 1. The Diocesan Bishop has the right to issue norms for his particular Church regarding liturgical services of healing, following can. 838 § 4.

§ 2. Those who prepare liturgical services of healing must follow these norms in the celebration of such services.

§ 3. Permission to hold such services must be explicitly given, even if they are organized by Bishops or Cardinals, or include such as participants. Given a just and proportionate reason, the Diocesan Bishop has the right to forbid even the participation of an individual Bishop.

Art. 5 § 1. Non-liturgical prayers for healing are distinct from liturgical celebrations, as gatherings for prayer or for reading of the word of God; these also fall under the vigilance of the local Ordinary in accordance with can. 839 § 2.

§ 2. Confusion between such free non-liturgical prayer meetings and liturgical celebrations properly so-called is to be carefully avoided.

§ 3. Anything resembling hysteria, artificiality, theatricality or sensationalism, above all on the part of those who are in charge of such gatherings, must not take place.

Art. 6 - The use of means of communication (in particular, television) in connection with prayers for healing, falls under the vigilance of the Diocesan Bishop in conformity with can. 823 and the norms established by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in the *Instruction* of March 30, 1992.(30)

Art. 7 - § 1. Without prejudice to what is established above in art. 3 or to the celebrations for the sick provided in the Church's liturgical books, prayers for healing - whether liturgical or non-liturgical-must not be introduced into the celebration of the Holy Mass, the sacraments, or the Liturgy of the Hours.

§ 2. In the celebrations referred to § 1, one may include special prayer intentions for the healing of the sick in the general intercessions or prayers of the faithful, when this is permitted.

Art. 8 - § 1. The ministry of exorcism must be exercised in strict dependence on the Diocesan Bishop, and in keeping with the norm of can. 1172, the Letter of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith of September 29, 1985,(31) and the *Rituale Romanum*(32).

§ 2. The prayers of exorcism contained in the *Rituale Romanum* must remain separate from healing services, whether liturgical or non- liturgical.

§ 3. It is absolutely forbidden to insert such prayers of exorcism into the celebration of the Holy Mass, the sacraments, or the Liturgy of the Hours.

Art. 9 - Those who direct healing services, whether liturgical or non- liturgical, are to strive to maintain a climate of peaceful devotion in the assembly and to exercise the necessary prudence if healings should take place among those present; when the celebration is over, any testimony can be collected with honesty and accuracy, and submitted to the proper ecclesiastical authority.

Art. 10-Authoritative intervention by the Diocesan Bishop is proper and necessary when abuses are verified in liturgical or non-liturgical healing services, or when there is obvious scandal among the community of the faithful, or when there is a serious lack of observance of liturgical or disciplinary norms.

The Sovereign Pontiff John Paul II, at the Audience granted to the undersigned Cardinal Prefect, approved the present Instruction, adopted in Ordinary Session of this Congregation, and ordered its publication.

Rome, from the Offices of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, September 14, 2000, the Feast of the Triumph of the Cross.

+JosephCard.RATZINGER

Prefect

References

- (1) JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideleslaici*, 53: *AAS* 81(1989), 498.
- (2) *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, No. 1502.
- (3) JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter *Salvificidoloris*, 11: *AAS* 76 (1984), 212.
- (4) *Rituale Romanum*, Ex Decreto Sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II instauratum, Auctoritate Pauli PP. VI promulgatum, *Ordo Unctionis Infirmorum eorumque Pastoralis Curae*, Editio typica, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, MCMLXXII, 2.
- (5) JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter *Salvificidoloris*, 19: *AAS* 76 (1984),
- (6) JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideleslaici*, 53: *AAS* 81 (1989), 499.
- (7) *Ibid.*, 53.
- (8) *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, No. 1511.
- (9) Cf. *Rituale Romanum*, *Ordo Unctionis Infirmorum eorumque Pastoralis Curae*, 5.
- (10) *Ibid.*, 75.
- (11) Cf. *Ibid.*, 77.
- (12) *Missale Romanum*, Ex Decreto Sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II instauratum, Auctoritate Pauli PP. VI promulgatum, Editio typica altera, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, MCMLXXV, 838-839. (13) Cf. *Rituale Romanum*, Ex Decreto Sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II instauratum, Auctoritate Ioannis Paulii II promulgatum, *De Benedictionibus*, Editio typica, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, MCMLXXXIV, 305.
- (14) *Ibid.*, 306-309. (15) *Ibid.*, nn. 315-316.
- (16) *Ibid.*, n. 319.
- (17) *Rituale Romanum*, Ex Decreto Sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II instauratum, Auctoritate Pauli PP. VI promulgatum, *Ordo Unctionis Infirmorum eorumque Pastoralis Curae*, Editio typica, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, MCMLXXII, 3.

- (18) Cf. COUNCIL OF TRENT, sess. XIV, *Doctrina de sacramento extremae unctionis*, cap. 2: DS 1696.
- (19) AUGUSTINUS IPPONIENSIS, *Epistulae* 130, VI, 13 (= PL 33,499). (20) Cf. AUGUSTINUS IPPONIENSIS, *De Civitate Dei* 22, 8,3 (= PL 41,762-763).
- (21) Cf. *Missale Romanum*, 563.
- (22) *Ibid.*, *Oratio universalis*, n. X (*Pro tribulatis*), 256.
- (23) *Rituale Romanum*, *Ordo Unctionis Infirmorum eorumque Pastoralis Curae*, 75.
- (24) GOAR J., *Euchologion sive Rituale Graecorum*, Venetiis 1730 (Graz 1960), 338.
- (25) DENZINGER H., *Ritus Orientalium in administrandis Sacramentis*, vv. I-II, Würzburg 1863 (Graz 1961), v. II, 497-498.
- (26) *Rituale Romanum*, Ex Decreto Sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II instauratum, Auctoritate Pauli PP. VI promulgatum, *De Sacra Communione et de Cultu Mysterii Eucharistici Extra Missam*, Editio typica, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, MCMLXXIII, 82. (27) Cf. *Rituale Romanum*, *De Benedictionibus*, 290-320. (28) *Ibid.*, 39.
- (29) And those equivalent to him in law by virtue of canon 381, §2. (30) Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, *Instruction on Some Aspects of the Use of the Instruments of Social Communication in Promoting the Doctrine of the Faith*: Libreria Editrice Vaticana (1992).
- (31) Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, *Epistula/nde ab aliquot annis*, Ordinarius Locorum missa: in mente normas vigentes de exorcismis vocantur: AAS 77 (1985), 1169-1170.
- (32) *Rituale Romanum*, Ex Decreto Sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II instauratum, Auctoritate Ioannis Pauli II promulgatum, *De exorcismus et supplicationibus quibusdam*, Editio typica, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, MIM, *Praenotanda*, 13-19.