

Healing Presence

BRIAN P. SMITH, M.S., M.A., M.DIV.

SENIOR DIRECTOR, MISSION INTEGRATION AND LEADERSHIP FORMATION

CALL TO PRAYER

LEADER: We often use the phrase “healing presence” in Catholic health care, but do we remember what that truly means? Our modern world seems to value doing and action more than contemplation and simply being present. Please listen to an alternative approach offered in the words of Hebrew Scripture.

READER: *(From Psalm 46)*

God is our refuge and our strength,
an ever-present help in distress.
Thus we do not fear, though earth
be shaken and mountains quake
to the depths of the sea,
Though its waters rage and foam
and mountains totter at its surging.
The Lord of hosts is with us;
our stronghold is the God of Jacob.

Streams of the river gladden the
city of God, the holy dwelling
of the Most High.

God is in its midst; it shall
not be shaken; God will help
it at break of day.

Though nations rage and kingdoms
totter, God’s voice thunders
and the earth trembles.

The Lord of hosts is with us; our
stronghold is the God of Jacob.

Come and see the works of the
Lord, who has done fearsome
deeds on earth;

Who stops wars to the ends
of the earth, breaks the bow,
splinters the spear, and burns
the shields with fire;

Who says:

“Be still and confess that I am God!
I am exalted among the nations,
exalted on the earth.”

The Lord of hosts is with us; our
stronghold is the God of Jacob.

READER: The Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

REFLECTION

LEADER: What does it mean to be a
“healing presence?” It means:

To listen more than we speak.

To remain calm even when others
are in chaos.

To stay clear and focused even
when no clear direction is apparent.

To value people exactly as they are
and not as we think they should be.

It means being with people in the
midst of human suffering, and
not trying to have all the answers
or explain what is ultimately
“mystery.”

It is about letting go of the
temptation to show only the clinical
and professional side, and hold
back the personal and human side
of caring.

Healing presence is not about doing
something, it is about being still
and present.

And when we allow ourselves to be
in this vulnerable state of simply
being with another person who
is in pain or in sorrow, they and
we are all able to experience the
healing power of God.

It is only in those vulnerable
moments of “being” that we
experience God’s healing presence.

(Pause)

Let us pray together:

ALL: Good and gracious God, You
are the source of all healing.

In You, we share in this
wonderful ministry we call
“healing presence.”

Today, we honor not only those
who give direct care to the
patients;

But all who indirectly serve our
patients as well.

We celebrate the way your grace
moves through each one of us:

Revealing your healing touch,
your compassionate glance,
And your consoling words.

Bless all of us who serve in this
healing ministry;

And strengthen us so we may be
your compassionate presence to
others.

Bless our patients and their
families who need to feel you are
with them.

May we never forget you minister
to us through them as well.

We ask all of this in the power of
your Holy Name.

Amen.