



Health Care: A Spiritual Practice

LEADER

Health care, the healing ministry in which we are privileged to participate, faces unique challenges from within and without. Yet, Br. Daniel Sulmasy, physician and philosopher, reminds us, “No amount of economic transformation can alter the fundamental meaning and value of health care, nor can it ever eradicate the interpersonal nature of the healing relationship that begins when one person feels ill and another, highly skilled and socially authorized, asks, ‘How can I help you?’ The spirituality of medical practice at the dawn of the 21st century in the United States therefore demands great virtue — courage, hope, perseverance, and creative fidelity.”¹

Let’s listen to the Word of God, describing one of Jesus’ healings, asking, “Where do I find myself in this story?”

GOSPEL READING

(Mark 2:1-12)

(Invite four participants to read the following sections of the Gospel)

When Jesus returned to Capernaum after some days, it became known that he was at home. Many gathered together so that there was no longer room for them, not even around the door, and he preached the word to them. They came bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men.

Unable to get near Jesus because of the crowd, they opened the roof above him.

After they had broken through, they let down the mat on which the paralytic was lying. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Child, your sins are forgiven.”



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Some of the scribes were sitting there asking themselves, “Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming. Who but God alone can forgive sins?” Jesus immediately knew in his mind what they were thinking to themselves, so he said, “Why are you thinking such things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise, pick up your mat and walk?’ But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority to forgive sins on earth,” he said to the paralytic, “I say to you, rise, pick up your mat, and go home.” He rose, picked up his mat at once, and went away in the sight of everyone. They were all astounded and glorified God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this.”

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Please turn to the person next to you and discuss the persons in this narrative. Did you identify with the paralytic, with those who carried the man to Jesus, with Jesus the healer, with the bystanders? How does this relate to your role in Catholic health care? What virtues do you believe you need to participate in today’s healing narratives?

(Allow sufficient time for those in the group to discuss this Gospel story)

LEADER

Having heard God’s word in the Scripture and in one another, we present our daily needs to our loving God in the words that Jesus taught us.

ALL

Our Father.

NOTE

1. Daniel P. Sulmasy, OFM, *The Rebirth of the Clinic: An Introduction to Spirituality in Health Care* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2007), 21-22.