

**C**hristians are called to further Christ's healing ministry by being open to all who need healing of any sort, particularly to the poor and the socially excluded. □ We are called to embrace the healing needs of others in our identification with Christ. How?

Friday of the 30th Week in Ordinary Time

Romans 9:1-5

Psalm 147:12-13, 14-15, 19-20

**L uke 14:1-6** One Sabbath when he went to dine at the house of a ruler who belonged to the Pharisees, they were watching him. (2) And behold, there was a man before him who had dropsy. (3) And Jesus spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?" (4) But they were silent. Then he took him and healed him, and let him go. (5) And he said to them, "Which of you, having a son or an ox that has fallen into a well, will not immediately pull him out on a Sabbath day?" (6) And they could not reply to this.

**Meditation by Barbara Dilly**

I have lately been listening more carefully to the accounts of Jesus' healing. It is because I have been working with health care in America and in rural communities in particular.

As an anthropologist, I recently presented a paper at the Rural Women's Studies Association titled Keeping Body and Soul Together: The Relationship between Rural Women's Health and Fitness and the Rural Church

In this paper, I noted that the strong social networks of rural communities.

The Center for Rural Affairs in Lyons

, Nebraska

has noted that the strong social ties present in rural churches can provide strong motivations to engage in healthful practices such as good nutrition and regular exercise.

This is particularly important to lower income women who can't afford memberships to professional fitness centers.

Increasingly, rural and urban churches are offering wellness counseling and fitness activities for their members.

Those who are most likely to take advantage of these programs are women.

These programs are particularly valuable to women who look to the church to cultivate mutual support and non-competitive environments to motivate them to engage in healthy nutrition and fitness activities.

In working to connect the ministry of Christ with the needs of these women to design appropriate programs, I draw on the practices of medical anthropology. Medical anthropologists recognize the role of social relations and cultural values in the social reproduction of health behaviors.

They examine health as a dynamic interaction between the mind, body, and spirit in cultural contexts.

Christianity promotes the value of wholeness and individual connectedness to the whole.

This is where the stories of Jesus' healing come in.

In my reflections of the healing ministry of Jesus, I realized that Jesus extended the healing arts beyond clinical "powers" to bring individuals to awareness of the wholeness of life. He especially reached beyond the mainstream social realm in his healing to link marginal individuals to the community and to more fully experience the Kingdom of God.

Christians are called to further Christ's healing ministry by being open to all who need healing of any sort, particularly to the poor and the socially excluded.

We are called to embrace the healing needs of others in our identification with Christ.

In the past, church members did this by visiting the sick and taking "a dish." In rural areas, they also helped out with farm and household labor tasks.

But times have changed.

Most people work outside of the home and we send flowers and cards instead of food.

And we use electronic prayer chains.

But increasingly, churches are engaged in healing activities that address a wide range of health, healing, and wholeness issues.

They participate in nutritional programs such as SHARE, WICKS, the Backpack program,

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MOPS, and TOPS.

They donate food to local food pantries and send money for world hunger relief.

Churches host aerobic, yoga, Tai Chi, and meditation classes at low costs to members and the community.

In some cases, larger churches are hiring parish nurses and staffing free clinics such as the one being organized in

Kountze

Memorial

Lutheran

Church

about six blocks from

Creighton

University

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I believe Jesus meant for us to engage in healing and health issues quite seriously. Medical anthropologists motivated by the teachings of Liberation Theology look deeper to the structural factors in the local economy and society that usually accompany poor health and unhealthy lifestyles.

From this perspective, the church is called to recognize the conditions of inequality in our society that contribute to poor health.

We are called to engage in non-judgmental care-giving programs that help individuals with few resources to better care for themselves as fully integrated members of our society.

I pray that as Christians, we will integrate Jesus' healing ministry more fully into our ministry programs. That will mean different things in each community, depending on the needs and the resources available.

If we look, we can see people in our communities who need wholeness and healing.

And if we open our hearts, we can find some resources to help them more fully experience the

Kingdom

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of  
God  
through healthy lifestyles and mutually supportive relationships.

## **Supplementary Reading**

### **TRAVEL LIGHT**

{xtypo\_quote} Carry no money bag, no sack, no sandals . . . – Luke 10:4 {/xtypo\_quote}

There was a bamboo hut right smack in the middle of nowhere that I saw while traveling in some far-flung island. Its sign said, "Global Outreach for Jesus (International)." I actually felt like that hut when I was 14 and a prayer group leader "prophesied" to me that I will preach to different nations all over the world.

How could that happen? I was a small-packaged, pimple-infested kid who wasn't very bright. Oh, I was a preacher all right. I was leading a small prayer group of 30 people, mostly my family, relatives and friends.

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International preacher, me? Lunacy! But listen. Now I'm 43, with lesser pimples and a receding hairline. And the insane has happened: I've preached to so many nations these past years, I sometimes wonder if my next flight will be to a planet called Jupiter.

I'm not boasting. I still see myself as that 14-year-old nobody. But all it had to take was God.

Because I was a "nobody" — I carried no title, no wealth, no exceptional intelligence — He was able to fill me up with His graces and all the good I need to go and preach wherever He leads me. On this, my most important journey, I'm truly blessed to "travel light." -- Bo Sanchez

## **REFLECTION:**

Do you "travel light" in your spiritual journey or do you bring "excess baggage" with you?

May I never forget, Lord, that I am so light that another term for me is "dust." May everything I do give glory to You.

## **Thought of the Day**

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God understands our words and our silences, too. So often silence is all there is to prayer.

For meditation/readings of the previous days/months , please click any of the following links:

<http://his-ways-better-than-our-ways.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.mabuhayradio.com/sections/the-daily-bread.html>

<http://butuangularforum.org/cgi-bin/dboard/YaBB.pl?num=1229339492/220>

**GOD BLESS US ALL!**

**O Theos Na Mas Evlogisi!**

**PRAY**

as if everything depended on **HIM** **ACT**

as if everything depended on **YOU**.

<http://www.tlig.org/en/messages/>

Daily Mass and Gospel [Meditation Broadcast \(Tagalog\) http://www.mabuhayradio.com/sections/the-daily-bread.html](http://www.mabuhayradio.com/sections/the-daily-bread.html) this link:

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