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The Healing Power of Love

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*"I have come so that they might have life and have it to the full"
(John 10:10).*

About ten years ago, I was given a copy of two books: *Healing*, by Francis MacNutt and *Healing Light* by Agnes Sanford (Logos Publisher). Both books were instruments in arousing my curiosity about the power of prayer in healing. Shortly after reading them, I had the opportunity to attend healing retreats conducted by both authors at which I witnessed both physical and inner healings.

As a conservative Catholic physician, I had always been skeptical of "faith healing," especially as I had seen it so often on TV in what would appear to be a "circus type" atmosphere. At both retreats I attended, I saw the healing ministry as an extension of Jesus' love for His people, expressed through quiet prayer and in the sacramental context. The realization came to me that *all* healing comes from God. He uses physicians and other health professionals, drugs, surgery and all the modalities. Prayer is an adjunct and the Catholic Church has always taught the power of prayer. James (5:14) states, "If one of you is ill, he should send for the elders of the Church, and they must anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord and pray over him. The prayer of faith will save the sick man and the Lord will raise him up again."

At the closing of one of these retreats, the team which prayed with us said that I would receive the gift of healing and that my wife, Pat, would receive the gift of teaching. Within a relatively short time, both of these statements came to be. Although my wife is an R.N., she has been teaching an adult weekly scripture class and we both have been involved in giving healing workshops.

When I left the second retreat, I thought about the statement that I would receive the gift of healing. I was skeptical, but after a period of

time, I began to pray quietly with my patients. As I stepped out in faith, I began to see things happening to my patients. These began gradually. At one point, surgical excision of a radiologically diagnosed carcinoma of one of my employees over whom my wife, sister-in-law and I had prayed, showed the tumor to be much smaller than on x-ray and pathologically was diagnosed as a benign adenoma. So certain was her surgeon of the former diagnosis that he sent her slides to Los Angeles for confirmation.

In these past 10 years, I have witnessed numerous physical and inner healings, including drug addiction, severe depression and other emotional illnesses.

I have been in solo family practice in San Diego for over 22 years. I conduct my practice as I always have, with history, physical exam, lab work and x-rays, but I have added the prayer dimension. It has really been gratifying for me to experience the healing power of Jesus transforming lives and truly making us whole.

As I saw these transformations happen, I felt that I would like to share them with others. As a result, we began giving lectures and healing workshops, so that others might experience Jesus' love and power. Numerous priests, physicians and health professionals have witnessed His healing power through these workshops and are now praying with others. There is an organization called ACT (The Association of Christian Therapists, 3700 East Avenue, Rochester, N.Y. 14618) which is composed of religious and health professionals and now numbers close to 2,000 (see accompanying article by Barbara Shlemon). It is my feeling that the medical profession is a vocation just as the priesthood is, and the Lord is calling each of us to minister to His people.

Praying for others is really very simple. All we are asked to do is to place our hands on the person and ask Jesus' love to touch and heal. We also have been given the healing sacraments — Sacrament of the Sick, Reconciliation, and the Eucharist. We are all familiar with the Sacrament of the Sick. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a powerful sacrament of healing and I have seen lives transformed in our workshops through this sacrament. We can appreciate the power of the Eucharist either for ourselves or for others as we receive and offer the Eucharist for each year of the person's life — moment of conception to birth, first year, second year, etc.

I feel we are each being called in a special way to minister Jesus' healing love and power in a gentle, quiet, prayerful way to so many who are hurting physically and emotionally. He is asking us to take that risk, step out and allow ourselves to be used as His instruments. Ours is a vocation, a calling. "The harvest is ripe, but His laborers are few." Will you respond to His call?