

Health Care Worker and the Sick: Pastoral Responsibilities

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Abstract

The health care worker is greatly challenged in health-sickness dialectics which is most often engulfed by angst and hopelessness. In accompanying the sick/dying, therefore, the health care worker should assure hope to the sick, not a false hope, but a salvific hope. Nevertheless, the health care worker can be a sign of hope in his “nearness” to the sick. The relation between the health care worker and the sick constitutes, then, the crucial point of spiritual company. It has to be such that will help the sick, in the difficult interior process, finally to accept the reality, to have sense of what he/she is undergoing, to appreciate the values that the experience of suffering puts in light, to meet the Lord, in whom all human hope finds its foundation. The methodology in this work is analytical.

Introduction

Jesus went about doing good, healing the sick and liberating those in bondage. This fact of the mission of Christ manifests itself in the task of the health care worker. It is a challenge and a form of Christian witness, and calls for the openness of heart and extending of hand to all people. It is a form of evangelization. It carries with it the principal mission of Christ as a prophet, teacher and healer. The health care worker, therefore, is the Christ’s eye, hand, mouth, heart and so on among those diseased in their life situation. This is realised in Love. Jesus went about doing good... (Acts 10:38); this is also in consonance with Christ’s announcement of his mission in Luke’s Gospel 4: 18-19. This mission of Christ, manifested in doing good, healing the sick, liberating those in bondage, transcends every age, tribe, race, colour or culture.

Life and death are two great moments of human existence. Within these two poles are health, sickness and suffering. The question of the health of man arouses the interest of the people. Health of man is not just on the individual but it has relation with the family, the society and with God. The harmony, the joy of good health is thwarted with suffering, sickness, needs and departure of beloved ones. These unavoidable phenomena in life stare man at the face: pains, fear, angst, depression, frustration, crises, grief and unavoidable goodbye. According to L. Sandrin, if life is a journey, sickness is felt as an incident of distance, a stumbling block on the way. And thus, it creates often anxiety and aggression. If life is an interlacement of relationships and communications, sickness puts in all crises: to the internal self, with the other significant figures of the proper environment and with

the exact future. A sense of impotence and of solitude often gets hold of the sick. He yields to anger and depression, especially when the sickness is chronic. Sense of guilt of various types fluctuates in his fantasy.ⁱ

The multifariousness of sickness and suffering, health and healing is seen not only biologically (physiologically) but also biographically. F. Alvarez observes that “the Gospel of Health is one of the privileged ways of making real the Gospel of life. Health and sickness, fundamental events of human existence, are always increasing their boundaries and, in a special way, penetrate further into the unfathomable mystery of the person and of the individual’s existential journey. To be healthy is not only “being alright”, or “feeling alright”, but also “being well”.ⁱⁱ This means that awareness, freedom, relationships, spirituality, a sense of life and love also belong to the area of health (and sickness), and in a privileged way; thus it is a matter of the fundamental structure of the individual person, and this must be taken into consideration.

The interaction between the health care worker and the sick should be cordial. The sick come with hope for care and healing. The health care workers, in their approach to the sick, can acquire a deeper value in their services. Their motivation to the service is enhanced by the fact that they follow God/Christ, the physician. They create an atmosphere of acceptance, love and care, being aware that they are doing God-given task. Encountering the sick is, therefore, an arduous challenge, however, a *sine qua non* to health care work.

The mystery of the cross and suffering

The theology of the cross is so essential for the Christians especially in the understanding of sickness and suffering. Standing on the platform of a Christian, Christ has transformed suffering as integral healing for man. The pain was an efficacious expression of his love.

To follow the way of Crucified Christ, the Christian involved in the world of the sick is called to become aware of the wound, to accept them and to integrate them, making appeal to the human and supernatural resources present in him (the sick). At the invitation of the faithful to see the presence of Christ in the wounded, Jung states, I admire you Christian, because you identified Christ with the poor and the poor with Christ, and when you give bread to the poor know you give them to Jesus. What is more difficult for me to comprehend is the difficulty that you have to recognize Jesus in the poor which is in you. When you have the hunger for healing and the affected, why would you not recognize? When you discover the naked, when you discover the stranger in you yourself, when you find the prisoners and the sick, why do you not see this fragility as the presence of Jesus in you? The difficulty in this journey, finds its peak in the ability to gather the pains to that of Christ. A journey, however, made possible from the mercy of the Lord the fountain of consolation as St Paul affirms “Blessed be the God and Father of our lord Jesus Christ, the merciful Father and the God who give possible encouragement; he support us in every hardship, so that we are able to come to the support of others, in hardship of theirs because of the encouragement that we ourselves receive from God.” (2Cor.1:3-4)

Through the awareness on the acceptance of negative dimension of life we develop in the individual sentiments the understanding, the participation, the compassion that will approach the other with the intention to help them to walk at the same movement towards healing. He who serves the sick directly or indirectly follows the part indicated from the crucified, not only recount the proper experience of the divine mercy but he is also called to respond to them searching to communicate to them the encounter on his journey

Jesus, the Good Samaritan

The parable of the Good Samaritan is singled out to explain properly the health care worker and his pastoral responsibility because of its essential characteristics of compassion, commitment and communion. This parable of the Good Samaritan is not only pastoral in nature, but also offers ingredients necessary for salvation. It is among the most powerful, personal, pastoral and practical parables that Jesus taught. According to Paul Cardinal Poupard, "It is a parable that is powerful, for it speaks of the power of love that transcends all creeds and cultures and 'creates' a neighbour out of a complete stranger. It is a parable that is personal, for it describes with profound simplicity the blossoming of a human relationship that has a personal touch even physically, transcending social and cultural taboos, as one person binds the wounds of another. It is a parable that is pastoral, for it is replete with the mystery of care and concern that is at the heart of the best in human culture, as the Good Samaritan reaches out and ministers to his new-found neighbour who is in dire need of help. It is a parable that is primarily practical, for it poses a challenge urging us to cross all barriers of culture and community and *to go and do likewise!*"ⁱⁱⁱ

The parable of the Good Samaritan calls for **compassion** challenges us to **commitment** and ends with the joy of **communion**. For a better understanding of the above three elements, let us first and foremost, make a brief explanation of the key words mentioned in the parable. The Samaritan is the central symbol of a definitive lesson on the essence of the divine and the meaning of the Incarnation. The figure of the Good Samaritan is used to make people understand the law of love which had previously been written into the text of the Old Testament but which from that moment on was to be of primary importance in the New Testament. The figure of the Good Samaritan is employed to explain the meaning of the concept 'neighbour'. According to John Paul II, 'neighbour' means also the person who carried out the commandment of love of neighbour."^{iv}

The reply of Jesus was very provocative. The first phrase, "a man"^v is very significant because of its indeterminate element. What comes afterwards indicates that we are talking about a male but nothing at all is said about race, religion or social rank. Is he a Jew? An immigrant? A foreigner? Is he a religious man or a non-believer? We do not know at the beginning and we do not know at the end. This shows us that in order to define who our neighbour is, Jesus rejects any consideration of these categories. The only facts which are supplied to identify the person are those relating to what had happened to him and the painful situation in which he found himself. He was a wounded man, a man half dead - this was his identity. It is not even known if he was able to cry out or to moan.

The man, we are told, was on his way from Jerusalem to Jericho. “Jerusalem was the holy city where the temple was located, where Yahweh had chosen to make His dwelling place. It was thus a symbol of the divine and the sacred. In contrast, in scripture we often find Jericho standing for the world.... Jericho is in a sense a symbol of secular culture”^{vi} According to Origen, “...the man on his way from Jerusalem to Jericho falling among thieves, represents Adam driven from Paradise into the exile of this world. And when Jesus went to Jericho and restored the sight of the blind men, they represented all those who in this world suffer from the blindness of ignorance, to whom the Son of God comes”^{vii} The man who was on his way from Jerusalem to Jericho represents the whole humanity, as a matter of fact, all of us. Like him, we are all on a journey. Somewhere, along the path, we are waylaid and robbed, deprived and stripped of what is best in us, the spark of the divine and the sacred; and we are wounded needing restoration to pristine health and glory.

The parable of the Good Samaritan belongs to the Gospel of Life and of Suffering. Fiorenzo Angelini observed that the culture of life, as opposed to the culture of death, explains in the example of the Good Samaritan three illuminating moments: our relation with the one who suffers; vocational character of service to the one who suffers, and finally, what must be the heart of this service.^{viii} It indicates what the relationship of each of us must be towards our suffering neighbour. The Good Samaritan stopped at the sufferer, so too, we must stop and not pass by. “Everyone who stops beside the suffering of another person, whatever form it may take, is a Good Samaritan. The stopping does not mean curiosity but availability”^{ix}. The parable represents lived and expressed love as the answer to the question posed by the learned man of law who wanted to know how man could gain eternal life. “Here we touch in essential terms upon the core message of the Good News: upon the idea that love should be at the centre of being. This, of course, was how God had presented himself to Moses, love in God for the world and for men, love in men for God but also for all other men and for ourselves, and without differentiation. Love informs everything and redeems everything, even the relationship between our egos and ourselves”^x. We are not allowed to “pass the other side” indifferently as the Jewish priest and the Levite, who represent litanies of those who must have passed by the other side. The impression we get is that the list could have been longer – a politician, a health worker, a soldier, a businessman, etc. What is important here is not the ethical judgement which excuses or condemns the act of omission, but the fact that men can divide into two categories: those that are prepared to become “neighbour” and those that are not. Obviously, to become a “neighbour”, we do not have to pour out wine or oil or spend money. And yet by acting in this way, the Good Samaritan makes himself a “neighbour” and at the same time demonstrates a way of being and living, which is human in the fullest sense of the word. For John Paul II, “the name “Good Samaritan” fits every individual who is sensitive to the sufferings of others, who “is moved” by the misfortune of another.”^{xi} Ignacio Carrasco de Paula draws attention to a figure of this anthropological category: “the ability to perceive the unfortunate person and the situation he is in. What did the traveller from Samaria see, which the others had not seen? The man? The wound? The need...? All these elements were more than

obvious, and to such an extent that the priest and the Levite avoided being involved in the affair. The Good Samaritan perceived something more - that is, a man who should be loved as we love ourselves, and without any condition: he felt himself called upon by a person who was worthy of infinite love."^{xii} Indifferentism is worse than hostility. The hostile person at least acknowledges the presence of the other while reacting violently to it; the indifferent person, on the other hand, ignores the other and treats him as if he did not exist.

Compassion

To encounter the wounded man, we are to cultivate **compassion** as Christ emphasises this, and this means that it is important for our whole attitude toward others' suffering. Therefore, "one must cultivate this sensitivity of heart, which bears witness to compassion towards a suffering person. Sometimes this compassion remains the only or principal expression of our love for and solidarity with the sufferer."^{xiii} We must differentiate between compassion and pity. Pity begins and ends with self. And even though it may make us feel for the suffering, it remains self-enclosed for it does not bear fruit in action. At most, pity ends with a sign of shrug of the shoulders. Compassion, on the hand, urges us to move out of ourselves. For it makes us not only feel for but feel with those who suffer.

Etymologically, the word compassion comes from the ecclesiastical Latin, *compassio* - suffer with, and it indicates an active attitude in confronting the pains of others. From the point of view of the Old and New Testaments, it treats first of all, of the divine attitude that is found the faith of Israel and of the Church. According to Bruno Moriconi, it treats undoubtedly of the principal voices that, in convergence, give contents of compassion. But researches to be completed with the term of love and all those concerning to the subjects and to the categories towards which turns to compassion, whether from the part of God or from the part of men, thus: brother, neighbour, the sick, widows/Orphans, the poor, the slave etc Of particular importance is the figure of the servant of God of Deutero-Isaiah, in which converges the messianic hope and the anticipation of the incarnation of Christ, supreme act of the compassion of God in the confrontation of all humanity and of each person. It is in the cross of Christ, in fact, that God and man become reunited with sympathy and compassion that is truly consoling.^{xiv} The modern use of the term compassion is linked to mercy, pity and tenderness. However, it boils down at the end to mean heart. While mercy, pity and tenderness leaves from external, compassion leaves necessarily from internal.

The Hebrew term for compassion (**rachamim**^{xv}) expresses, in fact, the empathetic link of a being to the other. This term returns, in fact, to this sentiment linked to the experience of the maternity. To understand this sentiment, therefore, compassion, first of all, referred to the anxiety experienced by a mother for her child just born. And this wishes to say that it treats a sentiment founded on a base very more physico-psychological, of which relative to pity, to mercy and to tenderness. Compassion, according to Bruno Moriconi, is therefore, an inevitable attraction of the fragility, of the weakness and of others' suffering that involves the necessity of *con-patire* (to suffer with). It is a vulnerability that pushes to risk and even to lose for the other the proper interests. It implies, in fact, an imperative assistance of the

other and a movement of participation in his experience with which it enters in strict solidarity. It is a profound sensibility to all that is weak or wounded that pushes to action to alleviate the punishments of who suffers. Compassion, in fact, implies concrete acts always as illustrated in the parable of the Good Samaritan.^{xvi} Biblically speaking, compassion is not sentiment, but faith. It is not a simple sentiment that was born from the capacity, more or less, to move oneself in front of others' misfortune or pain, but the face with which God is revealed and, of consequence, the foundation of that faith which really can and does eliminate resignation. It is the necessary premise to a true understanding of compassion which, before being a duty of man, is in the heart of God, so much interested in Israel, by engaging himself in her liberation from Egypt and to accompany the journey in the good and in the bad fortune, (Old Testament). In the heart of the same God who loved the world so much that he gave his only Son that died for love of all, as seen in the New Testament. From the point of view of fullness, says B. Moriconi, compassion is Christ that enters personally in the human weakness and loads the sufferings of all.^{xvii} For the Israelites, Yahweh is the "go'el". In the bible, writes Lohfink, 'go'el' is an important designation of God derived from familiar experience and historical people of Hebrew. 'Ga'al' signifies to liberate, 'Go'el', signifies him that liberates, that redeems, the redeemer, the protector, and vindicator of blood. He is the relative who is very close to the victim or with the obligation to vindicate, redeem the goods and the persons fallen into the hands of others, and strangers.^{xviii}

Generally, compassion has been understood as an instinctive movement of the heart in the face of the pain or suffering of other individuals. From a Christian perspective, the fullness of compassion is known in and through Jesus who discloses the compassion of God. In his person, God truly enters into creation, into the fabric of human life in all its contingency, frailty, and tragedy. Following Jesus entails an invitation to the praxis of compassion. Christian discipleship brings us face to face with human suffering and pain of enormous proportions, caused in part by social system and structures born of sin and evil in our world.

To show compassion, therefore, is to suffer with the wounded and the suffering, to share their pain and agony. While it is true to say that we can never fully enter into other's pain and that we more often than not remain outside as silent spectators to another's agony, compassion helps us in some small way not only to **feel with**, but also to **feel in** the one who suffers. This is the example of Jesus Christ, the Good Samaritan par excellence, in compassion. He suffered with and suffered in the persons to whom he ministered. He had compassion for the followers (Mt 9, 36 e 14, 14) and wept for Jerusalem (Lk 19, 41). Indeed, God showed his love for humanity, with the gift of the Son on the cross (Rm 5, 8). Jesus wept with those who wept as in the case of Mary and Martha at the death of Lazarus; He had compassion with the widow of Nain at the death of the only son, etc. As St. Paul would say, "for the high priest we have is not incapable of feeling our weakness with us, but has been put to the test exactly the same way as ourselves, apart from sin"^{xix} The prophet Isaiah had earlier spoken before He was born, "Yet ours were the suffering he was bearing, ours the sorrows he was carrying... he was being wounded for our

rebellion, crushed because of our guilt; the punishment reconciling us fell on him, and we have been healed by his bruises^{xxx}

Compassion is not indifferent or insensitive to another's pain but calls for solidarity with the suffering. Solidarity "is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say, to the good of all and of each individual because we are all really responsible for all"^{xxxi} Compassion demands that we get out of ourselves as we reach out to others in need. It makes us emerge from the comfortable cocoon of our self-enclosure and reach out in love and service to those who need our help.

The traveller is wounded, left between life and death. He is in such terrible pain and suffering that we are not even told if he was able to call or cry for assistance. Pain and suffering have always accompanied the individual and he has often not been able to respond in adequate fashion to the dramatic reality of the question they pose. Pain, suffering, illness and death, therefore, involve the anthropological subject, whether the individual person or the collective personality. Christians have laid stress upon the mysterious relationship, which exists between faith and the cross. They believe that the price of suffering is infinite when it is associated with redemption. Suffering placed outside love and faith, produces only evil. The force and the Charity, which enable us to face up to suffering, are the only elements, which are good in themselves. The superiority of the man who has suffered springs from the fact that he was able to prevail over the trial, which they imposed upon him. The mystery of pain can now but find a meaning within that relational impress which manifests the mystery itself of the love of the Trinity in man when he is called to communion. Man is a pathetic being. "Pain, not in its pathological form but as an awareness and perception of the individual's limits, is an experience which is of the essence of being human."^{xxxii}

It is a truism that why some people do not listen to others especially in their problems is that they do not wish to get involved. They pass by the other side. Nevertheless, it is in pain and suffering that we see the therapeutic encounter between two travellers meeting on the road of life. One carries his wounds, sufferings and pains, while the other has the ability to help and care. That is, to say, the helped and the helper meet in a common context. They give and receive information. This encounter may be verbal or non-verbal. They share experiences, thinking and sentiments. In fact, there is communication, which according to Brusco A., and Marinelli S., is "to put something in common"^{xxxiii} In the encounter between the Good Samaritan and the traveller, there is a communication of love. He stopped and stooped. He (Good Samaritan) did not end with that, but moved out of himself, to better the condition of the wounded person. He puts his whole heart into it, and does not spare material means. "They become for him an incentive to actions aimed at bringing help to the injured man. In a word, then, a Good Samaritan is one who brings help in suffering, whatever its nature may be."^{xxxiv} He demystified the "I" and stretched out his helping hand to the other, realising that an isolated individual does not exist, if by isolation we mean total and permanent separation from the society. For we depend on the society not only for our livelihood but also for our lives. By

this sincere gift of self, the Good Samaritan not only helped in binding the physical wound but equally helped the traveller to re-integrate oncemore into the society. He accompanied him.

If we could understand the state of the physico-psychological, socio-spiritual condition of the traveller, the crisis state of his sickness could be manifested. For Luciano Sandrin, if we are convinced that sickness is a crisis not only to the sick man but also to all family system, we would be at the same time convinced that an adequate assistance and an efficient care pass through the relation. The attention to the family, to listen to his story, and to walk together becomes a precious therapeutic duty, an important dimension of counselling and care.^{xxv} So, this traveller, a creature of God in His own image and likeness, should be attended to, more especially in this his disability.

Notwithstanding, the tendency of shying away from the sufferer is always there, but it is necessary to note that “the pastoral task of ‘accompanying’ starts at the moment when the other person’s need and affliction is ‘seen’, as recounted in the parable of the Good Samaritan: ‘when he saw him, he had compassion’ (Lk 10, 35)”^{xxvi} Accompanying is an attitude which can be interpreted in the light of the Emmaus episode: Jesus, seeing the two anguished disciples, goes towards them and shares in their suffering; He interprets the circumstances in the light of scriptures and leads them towards healing of their pain (Lk 24 13-35). Such is the methodology of care-giving offered by pastoral workers and volunteers. It is a participation in the cross of the other. Christianity teaches the solidarity in the cross, by which God manifests Himself as the One who suffered out of love for us, sharing our human destiny as true man. Learning how to suffer with a Christian outlook means elevating suffering to the fact of God’s having shared it with us, and not so much to be oppressed by a cross, which is erroneously understood to be the sole yoke of Christian life.

Reflecting on this encounter of love in sharing the cross of another, Lublich, C., observes: “For whoever has understood that the cross is essential to the Christian life and, therefore, loves it, suffering loses its weight and becomes light and easy, something he is able for, and it assumes its rightful proportions. In fact, in this case the cross is carried by two people: God and ourselves.”^{xxvii} “Once we have experienced the unique value of suffering and believed in the economy of the cross, having witnessed its beneficial effects, God shows us, in a new and high manner, that there is something worth more than suffering: love for others, in the form of mercy. This is the love, which stretches our hearts and arms to embrace the wretched, the poor, repentant sinners, and those whom life has ravaged. Mercy is the final expression of charity; it is what completes it. And Charity goes beyond suffering, for suffering belongs to this life alone, whereas love continues into the next. God prefers mercy to sacrifice.”^{xxviii}

In this encounter with the wounded, the pope said, “we must stop, then, in front of suffering, in front of suffering man, to rediscover this essential link between one’s human ‘self’ and his. We must stop before suffering man to testify to him and, as far as possible, together with him, all the dignity of suffering, I would say all the majesty of suffering. We must bow our heads before brothers or sisters who are weak and helpless, deprived just of what has been granted to us to enjoy every

day.”^{xxxix} Jesus, who is present in our suffering neighbour, wishes to be present in every act of charity and service of ours, which is expressed also in every glass of water we give “in his name” (cf Mk 9: 41). Jesus wants love, the solidarity of love, to grow from suffering and around suffering. He wants, that is, the sum of that good, which is possible in our human world: A good that never passes away. Stopping and stooping is a sharing in the wounds of the wounded. For “suffering and being at the side of the suffering: whoever lives these two situations in faith comes into particular contact with the sufferings of Christ and is allowed to share ‘a very special particle of the infinite treasure of the world’s Redemption’ (Salvifici Doloris, n.27)”.^{xxx} Healing arises out of compassion. Compassion is a genuine concern for the pain of another. Compassion reflects a desire for the surcease of someone’s sorrow, no matter the differences or similarities between healer and patient. Without compassion, the healer lacks the will to seek an answer, to research the problem, determine a treatment form, and follow through in what may be an arduous struggle to awaken the soul of the sufferer. Compassion is born when we discover in the centre of our own existence not that God is God and man is man, but also that our neighbour is really our fellow man. Thus H. J. M. Nouwen affirmed, “compassion is authority because it does not tolerate the pressure of the in-group, but breaks through the boundaries between languages and countries, rich and poor, educated and illiterate. This compassion pulls people away from the fearful clique into the large world where they can see that every human face is the face of a neighbour”.^{xxxi}

Commitment

The Good Samaritan went to him (the wounded man), and bound up his wounds.... This brings us to the aspect of action. That is, to say, “the Good Samaritan of Christ’s parable does not stop at sympathy and compassion alone. They become for him an incentive to actions aimed at bringing help to the injured man.”^{xxxii} What does that mean? To use a better and correct word, it is a **commitment**. He could have, like the priest and the Levites, passed by on the other side. He could have closed his ears to the cry for help and his eyes from the needy. But he stopped to stoop. He stopped to conquer. “At that very moment when he stopped and stooped to serve this stranger who had fallen into the hands of bandits, a neighbour was born.”^{xxxiii} Compassion that is prompted by love is “creative”: it creates a neighbour! “Thus one would be able to speak of a sacrament, of a sacrament of love: when one person makes available his living, being his heart and strength and energies, God causes his creative power to enter and there emerges the miracle of the relationship with the neighbour.”^{xxxiv}

The Church, like the Good Samaritan is committed to health and life. Is it not love that pulled the unrelated to relate, removing the white and black, the West and East, the Rich and Poor, the Developed and the Undeveloped, the Believer and Non-believer, the Just and the Unjust into oblivion thereby, transcending and transforming man into a higher value that cuts across those bridges of human existence? Stressing on this commitment as expressed by the Good Samaritan, the holy father said, “The long road travelled by health care, however, could not be accounted for if it had some purpose other than the safeguarding and recovery of

health; in reality, health care, because it is rooted in respect for life and for the dignity of the human person, is also a school for giving value to suffering and the service it calls for....'and here we touch one of the key points of all Christian anthropology. Man cannot find himself fully except through a sincere gift of himself. The Good Samaritan is the man capable of precisely such a gift of himself' (Salvifici Doloris n. 28)^{xxxv}

Christ, the Good Samaritan par excellence, before he left the world, mandated his disciples to carry on this pastoral ministry as he commanded in the parable "go and do the same yourself" (Lk 10: 37). The Church now carries this task: for "the Church wishes to serve this single end: that each person may be able to find Christ, in order that Christ may walk with each person the path of life, with the power of the truth about man and the world that is contained in the mystery of the incarnation and Redemption and with the power of that love that is radiated by that truth."^{xxxvi} Christ alone answers the fundamental questions of human existence. Thus the pope can say of himself, but speaking on behalf of all humanity: "Our Spirit is set in one direction, the only direction for our intellect, will and heart is – towards Christ our Redeemer, toward Christ the Redeemer of man. We wish to look towards him – because there is salvation in no one else but him, the Son of God"^{xxxvii} Without love, divine love, "he remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself"^{xxxviii} Even more the Church must proclaim that it is in and through Christ that God has definitely drawn close to people, making them aware of the inner truth of humanity ennobled by the grace of divine adoption. Consequently, the Church's mission is "helping the person to find himself in Christ."^{xxxix} The Church in every age has a particular function to direct man's gaze towards Christ, to help humanity "to be familiar with the profundity of the Redemption taking place in Christ Jesus."^{xl} The Church must recognise that individuals take different routes in their quest for God, a quest which also involves the search for the full meaning of human life.

The man in Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan, the traveller, is homeless. He is neither in Jerusalem nor in Jericho. He is stranded. His situation calls for commitment, for action. It creates also a way to eternal life, as Christ taught, "Come, O blessed of my Father, for I was homeless and you took me in."^{xli} Reflecting on this passage, John Paul II, explained, "The home is the place of family communion, where from the love of husband and wife children are born and learn how to live; in the home children learn those fundamental moral and spiritual values which will make them the citizens and Christians of tomorrow. In the home too, the elderly and the sick experience an atmosphere of closeness and affection and support, also in times of suffering and physical decline."^{xlii} This traveller that ran into the bandits is now homeless and, perhaps, hopeless also. He lacked the affection of the family, the closeness, the support, and the being-with-others. The family, as the basic cell of society, has a full right to housing adequate to its needs so that it can develop a genuine domestic communion. The Church recognizes this fundamental right and is aware of her obligation to work together with others in order to ensure that it is recognized in practice. "It is from love of God that Christians learn to help the needy and to share with them their own material and spiritual goods. Such concern not only provides those experiencing hardship with

material help but also represents an opportunity for the spiritual growth of the giver, who finds in it an incentive to become detached from worldly goods.”^{xliv}

The individual and collective commitment is also seen in this man’s situation. We were not even told how long he has been in this condition of being left “half dead.” (Lk. 10: 30) By being left in that state, and for an imaginably long spell of time, it is obviously clear that he was hungry. He needs food - material and spiritual food. He is hungry to return to “Jerusalem”. As the English adage states that a hungry man is an angry man, so, the wounded traveller is angry, he is depressed, and embittered by his condition. He is naked; “they stripped him” (Lk: 10: 30). By this act, this man is unprotected and exposed to every kind of danger. He is sick. Even though he could not speak, his presence on the road speaks it all. A presence, which is calling for attention to all travellers on the road: A practical gospel, which tells us that life is larger than logic. He needs a helping hand. He needs a “Veronica” or a “Simon of Cyrene” for assistance in his pitiable state. He needs one who could alleviate a little bit the weight of the cross. It is only in this light could we understand the teaching of Christ on the last judgement: “I was hungry you gave me food, ... I was a stranger and you made me welcome, lacking cloth and you clothed me, sick and you visited me....” (Mt. 25: 35)

...in so far as you did this to the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me. (Mt. 25: 40) The least of brothers of mine means the weak, the poor, the marginalized, sick, the abandoned, the sufferers, the orphan, etc. By identifying with those in this condition, we become a neighbour and brother to them. This brings to mind, a little anecdote^{xlv}: “A rabbi was once instructing his disciples. In the course of his teaching he asked them: ‘when does the day begin?’ One answered: ‘when the sun rises and its soft rays kiss the earth, gilding it with gold, the day has begun.’ But this response did not satisfy the rabbi: Yet another disciple ventured: ‘when the birds begin to chorus their lauds and nature herself bounces back to life after the night’s slumber, the day has begun.’ This reply, too, did not please the rabbi. One after the other, all the disciples made bold their answers. But with none of them was the rabbi pleased. Finally, they gave up and all, agitated, asked: ‘Now, you tell us the right answer! When does the day begin?’ And the rabbi answered calmly: ‘when you see a stranger in the dark and recognise in him your brother, the day has dawned! If you do not recognise in the stranger your brother or sister, the sun may have risen, the birds may sing, nature herself may bounce back to life. But it is still night and there is darkness in your heart!’ It is love that gives us eyes to see, a heart to feel, and hands to help. ‘The call of the Christian is to share this (love) generously on the different roads that are new and sometimes dangerous, but always open to people on the move.’”^{xlv} Therefore, “the first and the second parts of Christ’s words about the final judgement unambiguously show how essential it is, for the eternal life of every individual, to ‘stop’, as the Good Samaritan did, at the suffering of one’s neighbour, to have ‘compassion’ for that suffering, and to give some help.”^{xlvi}

As human beings especially Christians, we are called to this world of love; as the holy Father puts it, “the world of human suffering unceasingly calls for, so to speak, another world: the world of human love; and in a certain sense man owes to suffering that unselfish love which stirs in his heart and actions.”^{xlvii} Commenting

on this new world of love, exemplified in the Good Samaritan, Angelo Brusco, summarised the principal features of the model of the Good Samaritan as: “He is a wounded healer, that is to say, a person who can turn his own suffering into a source of healing for other people. He takes the initiative, that is to say, he goes towards those who suffer. He is capable of compassion and giving welcome. He is not influenced by prejudice about race, the culture, or the social class of the sick person. In his approach to things, *health and salvation* are closely correlated. Commitment to serving the sick person can also involve the giving of his own life.”^{xlvi} The Church is, therefore, looked upon to carry out these models of a Good Samaritan, for Petri Massimo, “each suffering acquires its meaning if it is associated with Christ’s suffering on the cross, because it enables the sufferer to participate in the redemption of the world. But the sufferer is also destined to receive the help of the church and of the health services because ‘Christ has taught mankind to make the best of suffering and to give of their best to those who suffer’.”^{xlix} Casera D. observes that the service of the Church to the sick is not a trade or a profession but a mission. We have to occupy them with professional skill, but also with all humanity, with delicateness, and meekness, with generosity of mind and of heart, with nobility of spirit, with investment of all the capacity to love the person and to help him. The relation has to be from person to person, in a climate of constant attention, of empathy, of confidence and reciprocal trust, of dialogue. So, it continues in the Church action of Christ’s healing.¹ The Church, toeing the line of a Good Samaritan must “stop” at the suffering man. The parable in itself expresses a deeply Christian truth, but one that at the same time is very universally human. This call for action has assumed organised institutional forms and continued in respective professions. “This undoubtedly proves that people today pay ever greater and closer attention to the sufferings of their neighbour, seek to understand those sufferings and deal with them with ever greater skill. They also have an ever-greater capacity and specialization in this area. In view of all this, we can say that the parable of the Good Samaritan of the gospel has become one of the essential elements of moral culture and universally human civilization.”^{li}

In line with this, the pope, in his post-synodal apostolic exhortation, *Christifideles laici*, dedicates more attention to a renovated pastoral action, affirming that it must be an action capable to sustain and to promote attention, closeness, presence, listening, dialogue, sharing and concrete help towards man in moments in which, because of sickness and of suffering, his confidence in life and his faith in God are put on trial.^{lii} By responding to this call of the Good Samaritan, “every individual must feel as if called personally to bear witness to love in suffering. The institutions are very important and indispensable; nevertheless, no institution can by itself replace the human heart, human compassion, human love or human initiative, when it is a question of dealing with the sufferings of another.”^{liii} ‘Go and do likewise’ is a commitment to duty. In fact, it manifests that Christ’s revelation of the salvific meaning of suffering “is in no way identified with an attitude of passivity.”^{liv} To realize this call properly, we should look unto Christ, the Good Samaritan par excellence, who revealed himself by doing. God reveals what he is through what he does. His design for man, fulfilled in Jesus Christ, reveals his intimate being. One cannot separate act and being in him. The incarnation is an act

of humility because God is a being of humility. To stop and stoop to the sufferer is both an act of humility and of love. Saint Augustine distinguished three degrees in love: “*amare amari*, to love being loved; *amare amare*, to love to love; *amare*, to love. Humility is absent in the first two degrees. It gives its purity to the third one.”^{lv} To love simply means to give unconditionally. It is a mode of being-with those who suffer or got stuck on the way of life. Francois Varillon observes that “the humility of God is his mode of being; and so it is with Jesus. And God is in the mode of *being-with*. Between “being-with” and “bending toward” there is a chasm. Jesus does not bend toward the sinners: he is with them.”^{lvi} To stop, stoop and act implies a participation in the salvific work of Christ who spends his life in the most painful areas of our humanity. “He calls himself a physician, he wants to be a physician. He calls himself and wants to be an advocate. He is both. The good physician is compassionate, and in an emergency he rushes saying: “I am coming right away.” He has only one goal: to heal. Jesus healed massively without choosing... The good advocate counsels, helps, assists, encourages. He also participates, all the more closely that he knows his client more intimately.”^{lvii} This is commitment. Nevertheless, he requires more.

Communion

The man who fell into the hand of the bandits is a sick person, but he is also a marginalized sick person who has been excluded from the community. He is isolated, ex-communicated, and in social terms already dead. Not only does he not have physical health, but he also lacks certain essential ingredients of a fully human health – most notably, the opportunity of growing as a person in interaction with other people. The parable of the Good Samaritan belongs to the gospel of suffering and of life made possible in love. In the messianic plan of the kingdom of God, “suffering is present in the world in order to release love, in order to give birth to works of love towards neighbour, in order to transform the whole of human civilization into a “civilization of love”. In this love the salvific meaning of suffering is completely accomplished and reaches its definitive dimension.”^{lviii} In fact, our compassion for the suffering that makes us committed to action to meet his or her pain, ends in **communion** when every man and woman who suffers becomes my brother or sister. It is strange but true that suffering unites. It brings us closer to those who suffer and perhaps even closer to ourselves! For when we are laid low and rendered weak and helpless, we sense more acutely not only our creatureliness before God, but also our solidarity with the rest of humanity. We might forget those we laugh with but not those we suffer with or have cried with. It is this bond that leads to communion. But there is yet another person with whom we enter into communion every time we stop, stoop, and act in relation to the suffering of another, that is, to say, any time we reach out to and serve the sick and the suffering. That person is Jesus Christ Himself. Remember He told us, “In truth I tell you, insofar as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me.”^{lix} We love and serve God as much or as little as we love and serve our neighbour in need.

The ecclesial community is called to respond as a healthy community, efficacious sign (sacrament) of an integral salvation. The Vatican Council II, in the

Lumen gentium records that: “The church is in Christ as a sacrament or sign and instrument of the intimate union with God and of the unity of all human kind.”^{lx} The Church has to carry to men the salvation wrought from the Father through Christ in the Spirit, that salvation which consists, essentially, in the liberation from sin and from death and in the participation in the eternal life and the infinite joy of the Trinity. “It is a personal salvation and at the same time communitarian, spiritual and at the same time temporal, historical and eschatological, an integral salvation that, in the horizon of eternal life, saves all the human person in all his dimensions.”^{lxi} This question of communion is seen in relation with the sick, for health cannot be such if it is not inserted within the relation in which the human dignity of the sick person whether fully recognised in all the moments or contexts of the course of cure. “The church offers to the world (but also to the Christians who work in sanitary environment) an anthropology of the person, created image of God, respectful of her dignity, of the human value, and open to transcendence.”^{lxii} The ecclesial community cannot ignore her obligation to be a healthy community. The preoccupation of God for the well-being of the human person concretises and incarnates again today in the compassionate engagement of the community to the benefit of those that are physically sick or psychologically suffering. Through this commandment of love, “the ecclesial community is presented as a place in which – on the model of Christ – loving others as the self, is experienced, shared, and reciprocated. It is so – to say in Johannine language – that *agàpe* reaches her perfection: when not only given, but also received. It is so, that the interpersonal relation becomes icon of the Trinitarian love.”^{lxiii}

Personhood is a relational concept. A person is a being in relation with others, and not a monadic entity lost in his individuality. “Person is originally movement towards others, ‘being towards’”, “the ontology of the person is an interpersonal ontology: being is being-with”^{lxiv} In this communitarian dimension, the council fathers observe that the “partnership of man and woman constitutes the first form of communion between persons. For by his innermost nature man is a social being; and if he does not enter into relation with others he can neither live nor develop his gifts”^{lxv} Continuing the reflection on the social nature of man and his interdependence with the other, the Council Fathers states that, “insofar as man by his very nature stands completely in need of life in society, he is and he ought to be the beginning, the subject and the object of every social organization. Life in society is not something accessory to man himself: through his dealings with others, through mutual service, and through fraternal dialogue, man develops all his talents and becomes able to rise to his destiny.”^{lxvi} What is that destiny? It is being in the Trinitarian communion.

It is precisely in her saved and healed community that the Church can express herself, both at a universal level and at a specific level, as a healing community. It is in her healing as a community that the Church expresses most fully her sacramental character – she reveals and communicates the salvation of the Trinity (of the loving Father, the beloved Son, and the Holy Spirit as Love) through new interpersonal relationships which are ever-more expressive signs of such salvation. According to Luciano Sandrin, “the model of service – that is, *diakonia* – which the church is called upon to manifest today in the world of health, as a sign of the kingdom, is a

model of ecclesial communion. This model strives to achieve the full integration of the sick, the disabled, the weak, and the vulnerable into the community. This is a model, which aspires to construct a community of new lives where the other person is welcomed not for what he has, but for what he is, in a process without barriers and prejudices, and in full appreciation of the contribution made by each individual. This is the Trinitarian model of reciprocity, where each person is a partner in a relationship where he gives and receives, where he heals and is healed. It is the model of Christ the Samaritan and Christ the sick person.^{lxvii} The Church also has an important healing function as a place of meaning. As Cardinal Ratzinger writes, “A vision of the world which cannot give a meaning to pain and render it valuable is of no use at all. It fails precisely where the decisive question of existence makes its appearance. Those who have nothing to say about pain, but that it should be fought against, deceive us. Certainly everything should be done to alleviate the suffering of many innocent people and to limit suffering. But a human life without pain does not exist, and the person who is not able to accept pain withdraws himself from those purifications which alone make us become mature.”^{lxviii} A. Brusco testifies: “the example of Blessed Luigi Tezza shows that suffering not only unites us with Jesus, but also becomes a source of compassion, understanding and participation in the suffering of others, transforming the individual into a Good Samaritan”.^{lxix} Healing experience goes beyond the apparent physical dimension and addresses deeper side of the human reality of freedom and communication. Forgiveness liberates man internally and promotes his relationships towards deeper communion. When man experiences a deep relationship with God and with fellowmen, it is a sign of wholeness of life. In this sense, healed man is a changed man in his convictions, values, attitudes and relationships. Forgiveness highlights the experience of *hesed* and *rahamim*, which promotes the dynamism of relationships within the covenant community.

Resurrected Christ, source of hope

The health care worker is, therefore, greatly challenged in this health-sickness dialectics which is most often engulfed by angst and hopelessness. In accompanying the dying, therefore, the health care worker should assure hope to the sick, not a false hope, but a Salvific hope. More often than not, the health care workers encounter three types of persons who are nearing the end of their earthly journey: the first person after considering the seriousness of his sickness saw no need to hope because he thinks that there is no reason to hope. He is depressed, hopeless and finds no meaning in life. He is afraid and wishes to die. The second person compares his situation as black and dark, full of fear and terror. There is no light anywhere, only the cold hand of death. The third person surrenders himself to God. He believes God each time because God is the one who sustains him and it is the same God that the sick person finds at the cross. He believes that the Lord knows his rising and going to bed. The Lord knows his situation and finally, he believes that after winter comes summer. These seriously sick persons represent classes of persons at the door of death.

Nevertheless, the health care worker can be a sign of hope in his “nearness” to the sick. In the journey of solitude, according to A. Brusco, to walk in the valley of suffering is hard to understand; harder, if such valley is wrapped with

obscurity. The relation between the health care worker and the sick constitutes, then, the crucial point of spiritual company. It has to be such that will help the sick, in the difficult interior process, finally to accept the reality, to have sense of what he/she is undergoing, to appreciate the values that the experience of suffering puts in light, to meet the Lord, in whom all human hope finds its foundation.^{lxx} The health care worker renders possible such process by participating with his intelligence and his heart. The health care worker is, therefore, called in competent love to walk together (*camminare insieme*) with the persons entrusted to him, opening to him the mystery expressed on the way to Emmaus.

Hope finds foundation in Christ and healing begins, when we get out of our pains from its worst isolation and know that we suffer together with the whole humanity, with the whole creation. It is only when we see and practice it, that we shall participate in the great fight against the power of darkness. With our little life, then, we have a share in something greater. Henri Nouwen reiterated this fact when he observes, “I deny my suffering no more when I experience how God needs it, in order to form me and to draw me near to himself. Probably, I consider my pains no more simply as disturbance and hindrance to my own plans and ability rather as means to comprehend God, who made me ready to accept him. I allow Jesus very near to my wounds and distracted life.”^{lxxi} By allowing Jesus very near to our wounds and distracted lives, we are drawn to him who is the author of life. We are at same time responding to his call, “Come to me, all you who are laboured and overburdened and I will give you rest” (Mtt. 11:28). H. Nouwen went further to say that we recognize that God is at the centre of our Christian faith, who took the burden of the whole world to himself. Suffering is an invitation for us, to give in our wounds and our pains in greater hand. In Jesus Christ, we see God suffer – for us. And this suffering invites us to the love of God, to have a share in a wounded world. The small and even also the overwhelming pains in our lives are closely united with the bigger pains of Christ. Our daily worries are fixed in an almost complete, greater sorrow and so also in an almost complete hope. Absolute hope lies not in our lives outside the grace of God.^{lxxii}

Recommendations

The health care worker in relation with the sick has to be Christ-like. That means, he/she must be available to the sick; must show love and salvific hope to the sick and the dying; they must see the sick as a person and not as an object of experimentations; they have to uphold the dignity of the human person; they must promote life and not death in which ever form.

Conclusion

When we speak of care of the sick, we refer to all the activities surrounded in the world of the suffering and of health, resulting not only in the physical and pastoral assistance to the sick but also to the promotion of health of man in all its dimensions. With regard to the spiritual care of the sick, therefore, the world of the sick is best understood when it is seen in the light of faith, animated from hope and inflamed from the charity. **It is an authentic story of the love of God, creator and redeemer.**

Christ, through his passion, death and resurrection has transformed the proper suffering of man to an integral healing. The pain became an effective way of expression of love. This is the meaning seen in the gospels and the prophet Isaiah: “*He took away our infirmities and took on himself our diseases*” (cf. Mtt. 8:17; Is. 53: 3-4). This invitation of love through suffering according to John Paul II reached its culmination in the passion of Christ. And at the same time it has entered into a completely new dimension and a new order: it has been linked to love.... to that love which creates good, drawing it out by means of suffering, just as the supreme good of the Redemption of the world was drawn from the cross of Christ, and from that cross constantly takes its beginning. The cross of Christ has become a source from which flow rivers of living water (Salvifici Doloris, 18).

The health care worker therefore, is challenged to accompany the sick person in this journey which leads to salvation through the bandaging of the wounds and reuniting him/her in communion with God.

In the Gospel of John 13: 2-16, Jesus called his disciples to the service of the Eucharist. He commanded the disciples to do this in the memory of him. In the celebration of the Eucharist, the Christian meet Christ the good Samaritan of the soul and of the body, the crucified, great expression of the love of God, the resurrected. Finally, Jesus does not wait for us to be lovable in order to love us, but loves us when we are unlovable and by so doing makes us lovable. Love does not wait for the object to be lovable, but makes it so by dint of loving it. Love is the only creative force in the world, the only power for progress. The common denominator in all healing is God. And because God and love are one and the same, the common denominator in healing is love. To heal and to be healed is to walk each day, each hour, each second with God.

References

- ⁱ L. Sandrin, *Come affrontare il dolore*, Paoline Editore, Milano, 1995, p. 95
- ⁱⁱ F. Alvarez, ‘Vita e Vita in abbondanza’ nel Vangelo di Giovanni (‘Life and life in abundance’ in the gospel of St. John), in “Camillianum” 14 (2005), pp. 246-247.
- ⁱⁱⁱ P. Poupard, “*A man went from Jerusalem to Jericho*” (Lk 10: 30), in *Dolentium Hominum*, “*The Church and Health in the World*”, Editrice Velar S. P. A., Gorle (BG), Roma, no. 31, November 23-25 1995, p. 15
- ^{iv} John Paul II, *On the Christian Meaning of the Human Suffering*, Vatican City, 1984, n. 28
- ^v John Paul II, *On the Christian Meaning of the Human Suffering*, Vatican City, 1984, n. 28
- ^{vi} P. Poupard, “*A man went Down from Jerusalem to Jericho*”, Op. cit. p. 15

^{vii} Origen, *Homilies*, 6,4 quoted in office of the readings for Thursday, week 10 of the year.

^{viii} F. Angelini, *Ero Infermo*, Editrice Velar spa. Gorle (BG), 1996, pp 106-107 “La cultura della vita, come contrapposizione alla cultura di morte spiega nell’esempio del Buon Samaritano tre momenti:--il nostro rapporto con chi soffre; --the carattere di vocation del servizio a chi soffre; --quale dev’essere il ‘cuore’ di questo servizio.”

^{ix} John Paul II, *On the Christian Meaning of the Human Suffering*, *Op. cit.*, n. 28.

^x V. Cappelletti, Where There is Love for the Art of Medicine, There is Love for Man, in “*Dolentium Hominum*, Church and Health in the World”, n. 31, 1996, p.12

^{xi} John Paul II, *On the Christian Meaning of the Human Suffering*, *Op. cit.* n. 28

^{xii} I. Carrasco de Paula, *The Good Samaritan as an anthropological category*, in “*Dolentium Hominum*, Church and Health in the World”, n. 31, 1996, pp. 204-205

^{xiii} John Paul II, *On the Christian Meaning of the Human Suffering*, *Op. cit.* n. 28.

^{xiv} B. Moriconi, *Compassione, fundamenti biblici*, in Cinà G, (ed), *Dizionario di Teologia Pastorale Sanitaria*, Edizione Camilliana, Torino, 1997, p. 226 “si tratta indubbiamente delle voci principali che, in convergenza, danno i contenuti della compassione, ma la ricerca deve essere completata con il tema dell’amore e tutti quelli relativi ai soggetti e alle categorie verso cui volge la compassione, sia da parte di Dio come da parte degli uomini, quali: fratello. Prossimo, malato, vedove/orfani, povero, shiavo, ecc...Di particolare importanza, inoltre, è la figura del “servo di Yhwh” dei quattro carmi del Deuterocanone (Is 42, 1-4; 49, 1-6; 50, 4-9; 52, 13-53, 12), in cui converge la speranza messianica e l’anticipazione dell’incarnazione di Cristo, gesto supremo della compassione di Dio nei confronti di tutta l’umanità e di ogni persona. È nella croce di Cristo, infatti, che Dio e l’uomo si fanno solidali e la compassione s’illumina di luce calda e veramente confortante.”

^{xv} **Rachamim** sono le viscere o il cuore come sensi della misericordia. Da **rechem** (utero). Vedi Ger. 20, 17 (“Perché non mi ha fatto morire nel **seno**? Mia madre sarebbe stata per me la mia tomba e l’utero, gravidanza perpetua!”) e 31, 30 (“È, dunque, un figlio prezioso per me Efraim, o un bimbo delizioso, che ogni volta che parlo contro di Lui lo ricordo sempre teneramente? Per questo si commuovono **le mie** viscere per lui, ho di lui grande compassione! Oracolo del Signore”

^{xvi} B. Moriconi, *Compassione, fundamenti biblici*, *Op. Cit.* P. 227 “La compassione è l’inevitabile attrazione della fragilità, della debolezza e della sofferenza altrui che coinvolge nella “necessità di con-patire. Una vulnerabilità che spinge a rischiare e perfino a perdere, per l’altro, i propri interessi. Un movimento di partecipazione all’esperienza del bisognoso, con il quale si entra in stretta solidarietà, e un

conseguente imperativo di assistenza. Una sensibilità profonda verso chi è debole o ferito, con il desiderio fattivo di alleviarne le pene. La vera compassione, infatti, implica sempre atti concreti, come ben illustrato dalla parabola del Buon Samaritano”.

^{xvii} *Ibid.* P. 228 “ Dal punto di vista della pienezza, infatti, la compassione è Cristo che entra personalmente nella debolezza umana e si carica delle sofferenze di tutti” .

^{xviii} B. Moriconi, *Dispensa, Sofferenza e Compassione; il sofferente nella storia della salvezza (Antico Testamento)*, Camillianum, Roma 2003/2004, p.98. “Nella Bibbia—scrive il Lohfink—quella di go’el è una importante designazione di Dio. Deriva dall’esperienza familiare e storica del popolo ebraico. Ga’al significa **liberare**, go’el è colui che libera, che riscatta, il redentore, il protettore, vendicatore del sangue.... È il parente più prossimo delle vittime o dei defraudati ad avere l’obbligo di vendicare, riscattare i beni e le persone cadute in mani altrui o straniere”

^{xix} Heb 4: 15

^{xx} Is 53: 4-5

^{xxi} John Paul II, *Encyclical letter, Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 1987, n. 38

^{xxii} C. Militello, The Overcoming of Emphasis on Pain in the Christian Concept of Suffering, in “Dolentium Hominum, The Church and Health in the World”, n. 31 1996, p.171.

^{xxiii} A. Brusco - S. Marinelli, *Iniziazione al dialogo e alla relazione di Aiuto*, Gabrielli Editori, Verona 1997, p.28. “Comunicare significa, “mettere qualcosa in comune”

^{xxiv} John Paul II, *On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering, Op. cit.*, n. 28

^{xxv} ^{xxv} L. Sandrin, *Compagni di Viaggio*, Paoline Editoriale, Milano 200, p.p. 80-81 “Se siamo convinti che la malattia è una crisi non solo del malato ma di tutto il sistema familiare, dovremmo essere altrettanto convinti che un’assistenza adeguata e una cura efficace passano attraverso tutte le maglie relazionali e quindi non possono non inserirsi nel tessuto familiare. L’attenzione alla famiglia- un ascoltare la sua storia e un camminare insieme- diventa quindi un preciso dovere terapeutico, una dimensione importante della relazione di aiuto e di cura.”

^{xxvi} F. Caretta - M. Petrini, *Near to the Sick, health and pastoral care*, CEPSAG Publications, Roma, 1998, p.116.

^{xxvii} C. Lublich, *Yes Yes, No No*, New city London 1977, pp 98-99

^{xxviii} C. Lublich., *Meditations*, New City Press, New York 1974, p. 62--64

^{xxix} John Paul II, *Angelus*, February 11, 1979

^{xxx} John Paul II, *Angelus*, February 11, 1996

^{xxxi} H. J. M. Nouwen, *The wounded Healer, Op. cit.*, p. 41.

^{xxxii} John Paul II, *On the Christian Meaning of the Human Suffering, Op. cit.*, n. 28

^{xxxiii} P. Poupard, “A Man Went Down From Jerusalem to Jericho” *Op. cit.*, pp. 17-18

- ^{xxxiv} R. Guardini, *Volontà e Verità*, Morcelliana, 1978, p. 149
- ^{xxxv} John Paul II, *Be the Good Samaritan of the Modern Times, in Dolentium Hominum, Church and Health in the world*, Vatican, 1996, n. 31, p. 8
- ^{xxxvi} John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, Vatican City, 1979, n.13. 1
- ^{xxxvii} *Ibid*, n. 7.2
- ^{xxxviii} *Ibid*, n. 10.3
- ^{xxxix} *Ibid*. n. 11. 5
- ^{xl} *Ibid*. 10. 3
- ^{xli} Mt. 25: 34-35
- ^{xlii} John Paul II, *Audience*, February 12, 1997
- ^{xliii} *Ibid*.
- ^{xliv} anecdote is a short amusing or interesting story about a real incident or person. Etymologically from Greek word *anekdota* “things unpublished” i.e. an-‘not’ + *ekdotos*, from *ekdidonai* ‘publish’.
- ^{xlvi} P. Poupard, *A Man Went Down From Jerusalem to Jericho*, *Op. cit.* p. 19
- ^{xlvi} John Paul II, *On the Christian Meaning of the Human Suffering*, *Op. cit.* n. 30
- ^{xlvii} John Paul II, *On the Christian Meaning of the Human Suffering*, *Op. cit.* n. 29
- ^{xlviii} A. Brusco, *The Model of the Good Samaritan in the History of Hospital Care, in “Dolentium Hominum, Church and Health in the World”*, Vatican City, 1996, n. 31. p. 206
- ^{xlix} P. Massimo, *Giovanni Paolo II e la Pastorale dei malati*, in “Camillianum” 8 (2003), p. 248,
- ¹ D. Casera, *Curare-Guarire*, in Cinà G, et al (ed), *Dizionario di Teologia Pastorale Sanitaria*, Torino, Edizioni Camilliane, 1997, p. 321 “Il servizio della chiesa ai malati non è un mestiere, e neppure una professione, ma una “missione”. Dobbiamo occuparci di loro con perizia professionale, ma anche con tutta la nostra umanità, con delicatezza e mansuetudine, con generosità di mente e di cuore, nobiltà di spirito, investimento di tutte le nostre capacità di amare le persone e di aiutarle. Il rapporto dev’essere da persona a persona, in un clima di costante attenzione, di empatia, di confidenza e fiducia reciproca, di dialogo. Così continua nella chiesa l’azione di cristo sanante.”
- ^{li} John Paul II, *On the Christian Meaning of the Human Suffering*, *Op. cit.* n. 29.
- ^{lii} John Paul II, *Christifideles laici*, Citta di Vaticana, 1988, n. 54
- ^{liii} John Paul II, *On the Christian Meaning of the Human Suffering*, *Op. cit.* n.29.
- ^{liv} *Ibid*. n.30
- ^{lv} F. Varillon, *The Humility and Suffering of God*, Alba House, New York 1983, pp55-56.
- ^{lvi} *Ibid*. p. 112
- ^{lvii} *Ibid*. p. 143
- ^{lviii} John Paul II, *On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering*, *Op. cit.* n. 30.
- ^{lix} Mt. 25: 40
- ^{lx} *Lumen gentium*, n. 1
- ^{lxi} L. Sandrin, *Chiesa, Comunità Sanante, una prospettiva teologico-pastorale*, Paoline Editoriale, Milano 2000, p. 47
- ^{lxii} *Ibid*, p. 59

^{lxiii} *Ibid.* p. 75. “La comunità ecclesiale è presentata come il luogo in cui - sul modello di Christo - l’amare l’altro come sé è esperienza condivisa, reciproca. È così - per dirlo con il linguaggio della tradizione giovannea - che l’agàpe raggiunge la sua “perfeczione”: quando non soltanto è donata, ma anche ricevuta. È così che il rapporto interpersonale diventa icona dell’amore trinitario”

^{lxiv} M. Cozzoli, *Essere e Amare*, in *Tullo Goff - Giannino Piana (edd), Corso di Morale Vol. 3, Koinonia*, Queriniana, Brescia 1991, p. 15 “L’essere di persona è un essere non monadico nella sua individualità, ma essenzialmente relationale agli altri. “La persona è originariamente movimento verso altri, essere verso”. L’ontologia della persona è un’ontologia interpersonale: essere è co-essere”

^{lxv} A. Flannery, O.p., *Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern Time, Gaudium et Spes*, n. 12

^{lxvi} *Ibid.* n. 25

^{lxvii} L. Sandrin, *The Church: A Healing Community*, in “*Dolentium Hominum, Church and Health in the World*”, 37, Vatican, 1998, p. 74

^{lxviii} J. Ratzinger, *La Chiesa, una Comunità sempre in cammino*. Paoline, Cinisello B., Milano, 1992, p. 111

^{lxix} A. Brusco, *Una Vita a servizio dei malati. Il Beato Luigi Tezza (A life in the service of the sick: Blessed Luigi Tezza)* in “*Camillianum*” 4 (2002), p.109.

^{lxx} A. Brusco, *Speranza e accompagnamento Pastorale*, Autori Vari (ed) “Speranza dove sei? Le immagini della speranza nel mondo della salute”, edizione Camilliane, Torino, 1995, p. 124.

^{lxxi} H. Nouwen, *Du schenkt mir Flügel, Gedanken der Hoffnung*, St. Benno – Verlag, Leipzig, 2002, p. 25

^{lxxii} *Ibid.*, p. 26