

Divine Worship and Human Healing

NACC Audio Conferences
September 10 and September 17, 2015

Presented by:
Bruce T. Morrill, S.J.
Theology Department, Boston College

Introduction

Fundamental Question
What does it mean to say that in anointing the sick, administering Viaticum to the dying, or performing the pastoral care related to these sacraments people are healed?

Session One
Biblical, Anthropological, and Historical Sources for Sacramental Healing

Session Two
Part A Pastoral Care of the Sick: Sacrament of Anointing
Part B Pastoral Care of the Dying: Sacrament of Viaticum

NACC September Audio Conferences Prepared by Bruce T. Morrill, S.J., Boston College 2

Session One Overview

- **Challenges and Possibilities**
 - For the church
 - In contemporary society and culture
- **Jesus the Christ, Healer**
 - The biblical context of healing
 - Second-temple Jewish context
 - Jesus as prophet
 - The medium of salvation: human lives and stories

NACC September Audio Conferences Prepared by Bruce T. Morrill, S.J., Boston College 3

Challenges and Possibilities for the Church: Liturgy and Healing?

- **Mechanistic-legalistic approach**
 - Extreme unction – “fix” at death
 - Clerical power
 - Laity’s desires for (shamanistic) life-passage rites
 - Squandered treasure for God’s glory and humanity’s salvation

NACC September Audio Conferences Prepared by Bruce T. Morrill, S.J., Boston College 4

Challenges and Possibilities for the Church: Liturgy and Healing? *continued...*

- **Pastoral-liturgical approach**
 - Recovery of *theologia prima* for all theology
 - PCS, OCF, OP are all rich in theological anthropology, ecclesiology, ministry.
 - All work, however, only on basis of Scripture: Christ speaks and acts.
 - Anointing of the sick, e.g., vocational
 - Viaticum, e.g., climax of Eucharist as center of this life and assurance of next
 - Required: biblically based reform of clergy and laity (who cry for rituals)

Challenges and Possibilities in Contemporary Culture and Society

- **Faith always practiced in history, in contexts**
 - Catholicism trusts creation and history as medium of salvation, redemption, justification
 - because *paschal mystery* is the heart of Christian faith

Challenges and Possibilities in Contemporary Culture and Society *continued...*

- **Reformed rites from Vatican II**
 - Highly modern moment – optimistic yet mildly critical
 - But on basis of sound tradition (SC 3, 4)
 - Present problems:
 - Decreased relevance of liturgical time (day, week, year) and communal commitment to ritual (although previously was often only "conventional," rather than biblical)
 - Sacralizing reaction to post-Vatican II liturgical practices

Challenges and Possibilities in Contemporary Culture and Society *continued...*

- **Postmodern (Promising) Possibilities**
 - Critical tools for analyzing context(s) and how sacramental rituals work
 - Worship and healing: cultural criticism (Morris) and anthropology (Pilch)
 - Shifts in types and perceptions of sickness
 - Cultural expectations: myth of immortality (in this life)
 - Biomedical versus biocultural models of illness
 - Power and authority
 - Healing and ritual

The Biblical Context of Healing

Modern language problem: What are we talking about?

Medical and Mediterranean anthropology: contrasting two key terms for sickness

Disease

only about physical symptoms

Doctor cures.

We limit biblical texts by this.

Illness

about meaning and experience

Folk healer heals.

We learn from biblical texts about the holistic reality of health and sickness as natural, socio-cultural, and traditional.

Note: These are models for understanding, whereas actual situations are mixed.

Jewish, Second-Temple Context: Diversity

- **Ritual symbolism reinforces identity of a besieged people.**
 - Pharisees: concern for national identity
 - Sadducees: concern for elite priestly status and political power
 - Galilee: peasants and pagan cities
- **Identity: Who's in, who's out.**
 - the impure (and collaborators)
 - the lower class (in a perfect cycle of victimization)
 - the destitute (and tax collectors)

Jesus as Prophet

- **Best grasps gospel portraits: teacher and healer**
 - sheer number of healing stories
 - revelation of God among the needy (the poor and marginalized)
 - Kingdom/reign of God, teaching aligns with ...
 - magic and meals, as experiences of the in-breaking of the reign.
 - For *that* solidarity Jesus gets killed (Crossan, Wright).

Jesus as Prophet continued...

- **Resurrection as perspective for all gospel stories**
 - We can analyze each with the critical-historical tools (above).
 - But every story is the Gospel in a nutshell, given in light of the mystery of the resurrection as the revelation of who the crucified Jesus and, thus, what the kingdom of God is.
 - Faith is *the* question in all gospel stories.
 - Don't let the scandal of miracle block that of the Gospel (Keck).
 - Healing, then, is meaning found in the Christ of the paschal mystery.
 - Miracles reveal his authority and the truth in his word/teaching.

Christ Jesus, Healer IV

The Medium of Salvation: Human Lives and Stories

- **Boundaries: Individual bodies as threats to social body**
 - Leprosy
 - Mt 8:1-4//Mk 1:40-45//Lk 5:12-15: Make me *clean!*
 - Lk 17:11-19: Only the pagan offers praiseful thanks and is *free* (Byrne). "Rise and go, your faith has made you well" (v. 19).
 - Hemorrhaging
 - Defiled and financially broke
 - Socially as good as dead.
 - Purity
 - Ritual and legal righteousness
 - Matthew: perfection = mercy and compassion

NACC September Audio Conferences Prepared by Bruce T. Morrill, S.J., Boston College 13

Christ Jesus, Healer IV

The Medium of Salvation: Human Lives and Stories continued ...

- **Mythical worldview: beliefs, practices, symbols, narratives**
 - Demons
 - Evil forces, personified
 - Whereas we have microbes and viruses *and* shame, guilt, and sin.
 - Threat is personal and social.
 - Forgiveness
 - Mk 9:14-29//Mt 17:14-21//Lk 9:37-43
 - Unusual is the father's need for healing (Reiser).
 - Disciples can only get it once they've experienced the paschal mystery.
 - Blindness
 - Eyes—heart: interior, affective thought
 - Prominent in Luke-Acts: the evil eye
 - Healing: conversion to faith, in Luke-Acts, also see John 9.

NACC September Audio Conferences Prepared by Bruce T. Morrill, S.J., Boston College 14

Christ Jesus, Healer IV

The Medium of Salvation: Human Lives and Stories continued ...

- **Salvation in Christ Jesus**
 - Healing = meaning and transformation via faith in Christ
 - Comes in fellowship/communion in the kingdom of God
 - Thus, early church has meal and healing memories of Jesus.
 - Development of charismatic, sacramental, and medical practices

NACC September Audio Conferences Prepared by Bruce T. Morrill, S.J., Boston College 15

Session Two Overview

- **Brief Review and Overview**
- **Part A Pastoral Care of the Sick: Sacrament of Anointing**
- **Part B Pastoral Care of the Dying: Sacrament of Viaticum**

NACC September Audio Conferences Prepared by Bruce T. Morrill, S.J., Boston College 16

*Pastoral Care of the Sick;
Sacrament of the Anointing*

- Quick lessons from History
- A fresh reading of James 5:13-16
- Discerning the Call to Anointing (PCS 8, 97, 99)

NACC September Audio Conferences Prepared by Bruce T. Morrill, S.J., Boston College 17

*Pastoral Care of the Sick;
Sacrament of the Anointing continued...*

- **Sacramental Power of Healing (5, 105-07, 121-26)**
 - Symbolic Gestures
 - Prayer of Faith
 - Prayer after Anointing
- **The sacrament as part of the entire Pastoral Care of the Sick**
 - Visits to the sick (PCS 54-61)
 - Communion of the sick (71-96)
 - Special circumstances of hospital ministry
 - Communion (92-96)
 - Anointing the Sick (149-60)

NACC September Audio Conferences Prepared by Bruce T. Morrill, S.J., Boston College 18

*Pastoral Care of the Dying:
Sacrament of Viaticum*

- **Sacrament of the Dying (PCS 161)**
 - Food for the passage (PCS 175)
 - Crown of the Christian life (175)
 - Following the Lord into the banquet of God's kingdom (175)
 - Strength, Jn 6:54 (PCS 26)
 - Pledge of the resurrection (26): Early church identified consuming Christ's Eucharistic body with being raised on the last day (Jn 6), at the last trumpet (1 Cor 15).
 - "Communion ... under both kinds": participation in the paschal mystery (26)

NACC September Audio Conferences Prepared by Bruce T. Morrill, S.J., Boston College 19

*Pastoral Care of the Dying:
Sacrament of Viaticum continued...*

- **Celebration of Viaticum**
 - Duty of every Christian (PCS 27)
 - Pastoral responsibility: "while still in full possession of their faculties" (27)
 - Mass is preferable form, with loved ones and care-givers: priest presiding
 - Baptismal profession of faith
 - Litany/petitions
 - Sign of peace: share genuine emotions (192)
 - Communion as Viaticum (193)
 - Apostolic pardon (195)
 - Viaticum Outside Mass: deacon or lay minister
 - Sprinkling with holy water (198)
 - Viaticum: communion and prayer (207-09)
 - Blessing and sign of peace (210-11)

NACC September Audio Conferences Prepared by Bruce T. Morrill, S.J., Boston College 20

*Pastoral Care of the Dying:
Sacrament of Viaticum continued...*

- **Ministry and prayer "at the hour of death"**
 - Viaticum repeatable daily until death
 - Commendation of the dying: Christian responsibility to the dying (213)
 - Short texts, readings, litanies: quiet, slow, intermittent, varied so as to meet pastoral needs (Calhoun)
 - At the moment of death: Commendation, note options (220)
 - After Death (221): "Saints of God ..." pointing to the funeral rites, power and comfort in ritual's repetitiveness
 - Prayer for family and friends (222): shift in pastoral focus
 - Prayers for the dead (223-31): service to both the dead person and bereaved

*Pastoral Care of the Dying:
Sacrament of Viaticum continued...*

- **Rites for Exceptional Circumstances/Emergencies (232-96)**
 - Contemporary Conditions: How exceptional really, in practice?
 - Flexibility to pastoral needs (not least, of loved ones): Continuous rites

For Further Reading and Study

Bruce T. Morrill, *Divine Worship and Human Healing: Liturgical Theology at the Margins of Life and Death* (Liturgical Press, 2009).

Liturgy 22:3 (2007): Theme for entire issue is "Healing and Anointing," with contributions by Catholic, Lutheran, Episcopalian, Methodist, and Presbyterian scholars/ministers. Publisher: Routledge/Taylor & Francis
<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title-content=q777159333-db=all>