“The Heroic Journey of Chaplaincy: Discovering the Wounded Healer Within”

Edward M. Smink, Ph.D., BCC

Part I

1. Introduction:

- Thank you welcome to our discussion about “The Heroic Journey of Chaplaincy: Discovering the Wounded Healer Within.”
  - While the emphasis of my presentation is from a depth psychological and mythological perspective, its basis is fundamentally spiritual and a theological reflection.
  - Our discussion is divided into two parts. Today we will explore the question “What is so heroic about chaplaincy?” Next week we will build on this week’s presentation and explore “How is the chaplain a wounded healer?”
  - Hopefully, by the end of our time together, we will meet our objectives in understanding how the ministry of chaplaincy is sourced in the spiritual, psychic and archetypal energies of the hero, and discover that the work we do is an heroic journey for both the caregiver and the one seeking care. Secondly, we will also have an increased understanding of how the chaplain participates in the universal archetype of the wounded healer, of which Jesus the Christ is, par excellence, an example. ¹

2. Part I:

- “What is so heroic about Chaplaincy”
  - On the one hand, we may not claim our heroic nature of chaplaincy
  - On the other, we may entertain a certain arrogance on our part
  - Understanding the archetype of the hero assists us to find a middle caring.

- In the time we have today, we will discuss

• The Nature of the Heroic

• The journey of the hero is resplendent throughout history in literature, art, science, mythological and spiritual traditions.

• Physicians, religious sisters and brothers, deaconesses and civic-minded people of many spiritual traditions became leaders within their communities of both scientific discovery and compassion.

• To be heroic involves more than just performing tasks or doing one’s job. The word “heroic” signifies the noble and the good, with acts of courage often deemed superhuman, beyond expectations, grace-inspired and sometimes semi-divine.

• A sacred presence

• Theological Reflection

• Theological Reflection is the work of the chaplain

• Limitations of space and time seem to evaporate as both caregiver and the one who is ill find the archetypal and psychic energies to transcend themselves.

• The heroic journey calls out of the patient and caregiver alike, the noble, the courageous and the god-like strengths and qualities to journey in and through the landscape of illness and suffering.

• “Heroic” implies an acute awareness of and response to a call on the part of the caregiver.

• Heroes in Medicine

• Heroes in medicine and healthcare inspire and challenge us

• Within the crucible of suffering, suffering often breaks one’s human defenses so that one can listen to deeper questions and insights that emerge.
• She argues that only in confronting the woundedness does healing begin.

• **Finding healing in woundedness**

  o Feelings of fear often give way to courage. The expressions of despair may become signs of hope, as Henri Nouwen writes in *The Wounded Healer*: “When we become aware that we do not have to escape our pains, but that we can mobilize them into a common search for life, those very pains are transformed from expressions of despair into signs of hope”.

  o Archetypal psychologist James Hillman suggests that only in affliction do the gods appear.

  o The suffering and experience of Jesus’ abandonment on the Cross as He struggled to pray Psalm 22, is such an example.

  o Dr. Angeles Arrien speaks of illness as one of the many mysteries of the universe.

4. **Part III**

*The Archetype of the Hero*

• **What is an archetype?**

  o Archetypes are elusive.

  o Archetypes are, according to Jung, “factors and motifs that arrange the psychic elements into certain images, characterized as archetypal, but in such a way that they can be recognized only from the effects they produce.”

  2 He believes they are the foundation of what the ancients call the “sympathy of all things.”

  o The vocations of a doctor, nurse, therapist, chaplain, and caregiver have centuries of modeling and stories that inspire. How do you capture the archetypal nature of each?

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• **Archetypes are Primordial Images**

  - These images and stories contain primordial images that constantly recur in the course of history and appears wherever creative fantasy is freely expressed.

  - Mythologist Joseph Campbell maintains that these images are the archetypes that are discovered and assimilated by the hero, that inspire throughout the annals of human history some of the basic images of ritual, mythology, and vision. 4

  - Archetypes have psychic energies that are universal, impersonal, and are identical in all individuals and show themselves in specific achievements, possibilities, aptitudes, and attitudes.

  - Jungian analyst M. Ester Harding calls these activities important urges that motivate psychic life: the drive to activity, the reflection urge, and the so-called creative instinct and suggests that “there is a little piece of human psychology and human fate, a remnant of the joys and sorrows that have been repeated countless times in our ancestral history.” 5

• **The Hero Archetype**

  - Carl Jung asserts that the natural urge of life is to follow nature as a guide in seeking integration. He maintains that this natural urge of life is nothing less than “what within the person is in the process of becoming.” 6

  - Characteristics of this synthesis are an experience of numinosity, wholeness and a “felt knowledge” of belonging to something greater than one’s self. We know from our experiences of discernment that felt knowledge is a work of the Spirit.

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Jung recognized this spiritual fact and suggests that the self-confidence gained in the hero’s journey is that “one faced the dark ground of his or her self and thereby has gained (or found) his or her true self.”

The Hero with A Thousand Faces

Joseph Campbell, influenced by Jung, recognized the call to adventure and the archetype of the hero. What stands out the most for Campbell is the awareness that the heroic journey is sacred. He believes that “The perilous journey was a labor not of attainment but of reattainment, not a discovery, but a rediscovery. The hero is symbolic of that divine creative and redemptive image which is hidden within all of us, only waiting to be known and rendered into life.”

Said another way, this natural urge within us, sourced in the divine, is waiting to be incarnated and make flesh through our interaction with those we serve. The divine and creative image within each of us is waiting to be known and rendered into life. I am reminded of Jesus urging us to “Take and Eat. This is my Body given over for you.” The task of the chaplain is to incarnate this reality.

Descent, Initiation and Return

Essential to hero mythology is the journey of descent, initiation and return. Joseph Campbell captures the universal symbolism interwoven in world mythologies of the hero and the heroic journey by metaphorically describing the hero as multifaceted.

Campbell amplifies the journey and the different tasks a hero can undertake in his classic, The Hero with a Thousand Faces. He writes: ”A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder; fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won; the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man.”

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9 Ibid.
Each time we knock on the door of a patient’s room, visit them in their homes or clinic, answer an emergent call on our beeper or phone, we are ready to begin an heroic journey. Dr. Christina Puchalski stresses the importance of that first impression between caregiver and patient saying: “When you knock on the door of a patient, take a deep breath and know why you are entering the room.”

Jung suggests that “the hero's main feat is to overcome the monster of darkness: it is the long-hoped-for and expected triumph of consciousness over the unconscious.”

5. Part IV

**The Hero’s Journey**

The archetype of the heroic journey is simply, writes Lansing Smith in *The Hero Journey in Literature*, a metaphor for one’s spiritual growth and development.

This descent is different for the caregiver and the one who is ill. Each participant can accept or reject the ancient and universal invitation that healing requires. For the caregiver, the call comes with the decision to enter into the world that the patient experiences. The crossing of this threshold, both physically and professionally, invites the one who is ill to respond.

**The Challenge of What We do**

Chaplains are daily put to the test in the practice of compassion.

The mythologies of the hero archetype offer one the hope of finding the energies, skills, and strengths to replenish both caregiver and patient.

**The Liminality of Descent**

As suggested by Campbell, the descent opens one up to enter the world of supernatural and otherworldly dangers and wonders.

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Only in the darkness of uncertainty is one able to be, as Robert Romanyshyn suggests, lost in the loneliness of not knowing. Knowing, which springs solely out of utility and wants to do something with what it knows, is left unattended.  

Implicit in the process of self-realization and self-awareness is the acknowledgement and recognition of one’s shadow hidden in the depths of the unconsciousness. Jung addresses this side of the psyche suggesting that “One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light but by making the darkness conscious.”  

**Transformative Insights and Return**

Campbell suggests that the call to adventure signifies that destiny has challenged the hero: “The call to adventure signifies that destiny has summoned the hero and transferred his spiritual center of gravity from within the pale of society to a zone unknown.  

The mythological image of being in the belly of a whale to demonstrate how the hero is swallowed across the threshold of the underworld.  

Jung too would write that “The hero himself appears as a being of more than human stature. He or she is distinguished from the very beginning by godlike characteristics. Since he or she is psychologically an archetype of the self, divinity only confirms that the self is numinous, a sort of god, or having some share in the divine nature.”  

This is our work as a chaplain. Mystery becomes enfleshed as insight takes form in images that mirror dimly an experience of the *mysterium tremendum.*

6. **Part V**

**Practical Application for the Ministry of Chaplaincy**

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Jungian analyst M. Ester Harding speaks of this transformative process: “For it is not that these individuals are more consciously heroic or more deliberately unselfish than before. The fact is that in them consciousness has changed.”

This is the work of theological reflection, time to sort out and allow the experiences to teach us.

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Part II

• Introduction:

Thank you Jeanine and welcome to our discussion about “The Heroic Journey of Chaplaincy: Discovering the Wounded Healer Within.” Today I would like to explore the question “How is the chaplain a wounded healer?”

This afternoon our discussion will focus on four main themes that are a summary of Chapter 4 of my dissertation.

1. Hospitality, the soul of caregiving

2. A Short History of the Archetype of the Wounded Healer

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3. Jesus, the Christ, example *par excellence* of the Wounded Healer

4. Chaplains as wounded healers

Part I:

- **Hospitality: The Soul of Caregiving**

  o Chaplains have unique opportunities to reflect on their experiences with those they serve.

  o Lingering, suggests Robert Romanyshyn, allows one to experience the “invisible and subtle shapes and forms that shine though the visible, that sustain it and give it its holy terrors and its sensuous charms. Lingering allows one to be “hospitable” to what is and allows the caregiver to do the same. Romanyshyn considers lingering similar to an act of hospitality since hospitality is a kind of acceptance of things as they are. He writes: “Hospitality is a presence to the present moment which frees the image in the event, deliteralizes the factual character of the event and dissolves preconceived ideas about what this moment should be.”

  o Being present to another is a skillful practice. Being hospitable to all the creative possibilities demands a personal conviction that healing can occur.

  o The heart of compassion is hospitality and the practice of hospitality is the ability to welcome the other. To welcome the other means to accept and be present to where the other is, to be present to one’s pain, abandonment, faith, crisis, doubts, anger or fears. And one can only be present or hospitable and therefore empathetic and compassionate, if one can understand these same experiences within oneself.

  o To be hospitable means to be present in such a way that the one who suffers discovers within himself or herself the capacity for and the possibility for healing. Human dignity is restored through the sacramental encounter with the chaplain. And concurrently, the chaplain in facilitating this process, rediscovers his or her own human dignity being restored.

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The heroic journey of illness offers both the patient and the caregiver the possibility of discovering within their woundedness insight that leads to healing and transformation.

The ability to enter into, to hold, to guide, and to sustain oneself or another through the mystery of illness is best described as the archetypal image of the wounded-healer.

The archetype of the wounded-healer conveys the inner reality that within the healer is woundedness and within the one who is wounded sleeps a healer.

**A Healer Function Within**

Commonly referred to as the doctor-patient relationship, the interaction between the caregiver and the patient is an essential aspect of healing.

Adolf Guggenbühl-Craig articulates this fundamental truth about the wounded-healer: “psychologically this means not only that the patient has a physician within himself but also that there is a patient in the doctor.”

Guggenbühl-Craig refers to this dynamic as the healer-patient function. He maintains that when a patient seeks a healer or doctor, an intra-psychic or ‘inner healer’ or ‘healing factor’ is also energized.

Healing occurs not only through the relationship between caregiver and patient, but also through an interior dialogue with oneself. Pastoral Counselor William Augsburger maintains that: “When wound meets wound, there is interpathy and compassion; when healing calls to healing, there is awareness, insight, repentance, change, and growth.”

**Who is a Wounded-Healer?**

Who is a wounded-healer, and to what extent is the term significant for the patient and the caregiver? In the broadest sense, being human guarantees that one will experience suffering and the archetypal energies of the wounded-healer.

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Some wounds may heal and some may not.

Freud and Jung learned insights about psychotherapy from reflection on their own personal suffering and their desire to find meaning and healing. Being human necessitates acknowledgment of weakness, vulnerability, incompleteness, and woundedness.

In 1951, Jung first used the term “wounded-healer.” He writes that “the doctor is effective only when he himself is affected [... ] only the wounded physician heals. But when the doctor wears his personality like a coat of armor, he has no effect.”21

The physician becomes an instrument of healing when his technical skills are guided by his experiences and self reflection. Len Sperry in quotes the words of Dr. Martin Lipp: “My wounds become my spectacles, helping me to see what I encounter with empathy and a grateful sense of privilege,” 22 The patient facilitates the doctor’s own healing through helping him or her discover those interior resources that allow healing and transformation to occur. Each is involved in a process that activates a healer function from within.

**What Does Woundedness Want?**

What does woundedness wish to say to one who is afflicted? In the depths of the silence in between the fibers of pain, a voice may be screaming to be heard.

An understanding of the archetype of the wounded-healer allows one to recognize one’s vulnerability, fears, limitations, and woundedness. At this juncture both caregiver and patient may begin to understand that their unique relationship is in supporting and assisting each other in their heroic and transformative journeys.

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Part II: A Short History of the Archetype of the Wounded Healer

• Within western philosophy and thought, Plato recognized the importance of the physician as a wounded-healer. In *The Republic*, he argued that the most skillful physicians are those who have suffered and learned from a variety of illnesses. Rather than being models of good health alone, they became eloquent examples of the wounded healer through understanding maladies from their own experience.

  o Woundedness implies that each person has wounds that heal and wounds that are always in the process of being healed. Individual and collective memories appear and reappear and become enfleshed through the remembrance of a story.

  o Spirit and flesh agonize with crushing pain as memory attempts to bring to light “bit by bit” what needs to be remembered, maintains Toni Morrison.23

  o “Pain does have strong arms,” comments Patricia Hampl, as memory reveals the truth of many circumstances and episodes in the past. “Their labor,” she writes, “is the creation of symbol. But its more accurate to call it the recognition of symbol. For meaning is not “attached” to the detail by the memoirist; meaning is revealed.”

  o For our discussion this afternoon I would like to reflect on three examples of wounded-healers from mythology and spirituality. They are Chiron, Asclepius, and Jesus Christ.

• **Chiron**

  o An example in Greek Mythology of a wounded-healer is the divine physician Chiron, the centaur and teacher of the renowned physician Asclepius.

  o “He was wise and gentle,” comments Christine Downing24 and “In his case, his animal nature seemed to signify an attunement to

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instinctual wisdom and a deep understanding of embodiment, an understanding that informed his gifts as hunter, sculptor, and healer.”

- Chiron is a god who suffers an incurable wound inflicted upon him by a poisoned arrow from Hercules. The paradox of his life was that as a healer, he could cure repeatedly, yet remained wounded, which C. Jess Groesbeck maintains is at the heart of the mystery of healing. Being wounded is synonymous with being imperfect, with limitations of the flesh.

- Woundedness is a part of being human. Emotional, physical, psychological, and spiritual suffering may lead one to insight and transformation which springs forth from one’s soul pain.

- The underlying principle of the mystery of the incurable wound of Chiron that is applicable to today appears to be that knowledge is gleaned from woundedness.

- Carl Kerényi maintains that the woundedness of the healer is like a fountain of knowledge of which the healer forever partakes. In mythic thought, healing power and woundedness are inseparable, hence the reality of a wounded-healer.

- The paradigm of the incurable wound of Chiron gives one a unique perspective about being a wounded-healer suggesting that some wounds heal and other do not.

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• **The Mortal God Asclepius**

- Asclepius, the Roman name for the Greek God of Medicine, Asklepios, is as mysterious as the art of medicine itself. Spanning more than 1000 years of history, from primordial sagas and heroic tales to a deified mortal and god, the legend of Asclepius, more than any other Greek or Roman god, captures the imagination and needs of those who seek his help.

- Since sickness was caused by a divine action, it could only be cured by a god or other divine action. Thus the oracle of Apollo applies: “He who wounds also heals.”

  Interesting even today, many people believe that when they are ill or have misfortune, God is punishing them.

- Healing becomes a divine and sacred action and when it is vested with such dignity, C. Jess Groesbeck argues, illness has the inexhaustible advantage that it can be vested with a healing power. He writes in “The Archetypal Image of the Wounded Healer”:

  “The *divina afflictio* then contains its own diagnosis, therapy and prognosis provided the appropriate attitude towards it is adopted. The right attitude was made possible by the cult, which simply consisted in leaving the entire art of healing to the divine physician.”

- Ancient physicians like Asclepius were considered to participate in the godly and divine acts of healing. Kerényi suggests that it is the physician’s awareness of the divinity of his healing art “which transplants wisdom into medicine and medicine into wisdom.”

- Asclepius, like no other god, remained alive until the 3rd century of the Common Era when other deities faded and were lost. His symbols of a snake and staff continue to be the emblem of modern medicine. Asclepius is divinized as both a mortal and a god and even later during the first centuries of Christianity was seen as a prototype of Jesus Christ.

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27 Meier, Carl A. *Healing Dream and Ritual*, Einsiedelin: Daimon, 1989

Parallels to Asclepius and Christ began to emerge early. Both were born of divine fathers and human mothers. Each was raised by foster fathers, Chiron and Joseph. Each suffered and died and descended into Hades. Each rose and ascended to the heavens. The serpent, a symbol of transformation, becomes a symbol for each.

While there were these similarities, yet there remained one startling difference argues Thomas F. Matthews. Although Asclepius was known as the gentle or kind one, there is no image or statuary of him curing like there is of Christ. 29

Jesus, on the other hand, is shown actually working the miraculous cures he was said to perform. He is shown touching those he is curing, the leper, the paralytic, and the blind. The miracles of Asclepius were recorded in stone, while those of Christ were shown in tender detail in incessant replication on tomb decorations, reliefs, table ware, and clothing.

Part IV: Jesus, the Christ, example par excellence of the Wounded Healer: Christ: The New Divine Physician

With the rise of Christianity, Christ becomes the new divine physician, the wounded-healer who takes upon himself the woundedness of humankind. Christ becomes the Suffering Servant of Yahweh as prefigured by Isaiah 53:5.

He is lifted up for all to see (John 3:14) and becomes metaphorically like Asclepius, the divine serpent, a worm and no man, whose image becomes a sign of hope to those who enter into the underworld of darkness, woundedness, illness, and sin.

Henri Nouwen describes how the mythology of the wounded-healer is present in Hassidic stories and in the Christian symbolism of the Crucifixion, and how the extraordinary healing presence and power of healers was attributed to weakness or woundedness within them.30

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Commentators on the Gospel of St. Matthew suggest that he wrote for a Jewish audience. As such, Matthew’s readers were familiar with the Scriptures and would have had an understanding of the metaphors and images that Matthew employs.

They would have recognized when Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” (Matt. 27: 46) that Jesus was reciting from Psalm 22:1. “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?” The prayer is about one who experiences the abandonment of God and laments as he wanders in and out of consciousness.

**From the Depths**

The worm is a metaphor for one whose body is mangled and disfigured and no longer considered human. Woundedness brings destruction to both body and soul. Woundedness also gives insight for healing and transformation. A worm crawls in the underworld of the earth bringing destruction in the consumption of waste materials. At the same time it brings new life with the aeration and fertilization of the soil.

This chthonic creature becomes another symbol for the primordial serpent that crawls on the earth and in Hindu mythology is close to its heartbeat. Like the serpent hanging from the staff of Moses bringing healing to those who look upon it, this Christ-serpent hangs on the wood of the Cross similar to the serpent that is an ancient Asklepian symbol of healing and transformation.

The serpent sheds its skin and lives in the liminality between heaven and earth, life and death, consciousness and unconsciousness.

During the Exodus, when the people of Israel were complaining about their wandering in the desert, Yahweh sends fiery serpents among the people as a punishment for their lack of trust. Thus serpents can protect and destroy. They can be symbols of transformation and new life.

A snake can inflict a mortal wound, but the power of a man-made symbol, an archetypal form, can overcome it. Symbols of the imagination are more potent than actual snakes. So Moses is directed by God to tell the people who were bitten to gaze upon the bronze serpent hanging from his staff.

What caused woundedness and death is the very symbol that now will restore and renew life as those who gaze upon it will be healed.
• **Christ, the Wounded-Healer**

  o The first reading from the liturgy of the Celebration of the Lord’s Passion in the Roman Catholic ritual recalls these words of Isaiah and underscores this image: See my servant shall prosper, he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high. Just as there were many who were astonished by him, so marred was his appearance, beyond human semblance and his form was beyond that of mortals. (Is. 52: 13-14)

  o The image of Christ reflects these ancient images. Born from the archetypical energies of the past and the wisdom of the cosmic serpent, this image reveals a God who suffers and then becomes an agent of transformation. Isaiah continues: “But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we were healed” (Is. 53:5).

  o This icon captures not only the image of the suffering of Christ but attributes to him the title of the servant of Yahweh. This image and title summarize those ancient images that were prefigured in older spiritual traditions. Important aspects of this icon are the association of the staff or rod and the serpent. The staff symbolizes authority and the tree of life while the serpent is associated with healing and transformation and with Christ hanging on the wood of the Cross.

  o John writes in his Gospel: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up” (John 3:14).

  o The image takes on a life of its own as Christ the sacred serpent astonishes those who gaze upon him. Isaiah continues with the analogy, “so shall he startle many nations, kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which had not been told them they shall see, and that which they not heard, they shall contemplate” (52: 15).

  o Christ, the wounded-healer, is lifted up for all to see and becomes a universal image of hope to those who enter into the underworld of darkness, woundedness and sin.

  o The symbol becomes the icon of soul-making, that creative place where beauty is active and reflected. So universal is this symbol that it has become the modern symbol of medicine, the caduceus.
When a person is ill, he or she may become this icon that is lifted up for us as chaplains to minister to. Each becomes the means of transformation in every action that a healthcare professional provides.

Recently the term “wounded-healer” has been used synonymously with burnout or impairment of caregivers in the healing professions, comments Len Sperry. He recognizes that the term is not new and has been associated with a sacred tradition across several cultures throughout the ages.

Serge Daneault asks the question whether this archetype can assist physicians and caregivers. He writes: “The physician’s experience of being wounded is what makes him a brother of the patient, rather than his master. This triggers a fundamental change in perspective. The suffering patient can be cared for by the physician and be instrumental in the physician’s own healing. Each encounter between physician and patient can be transforming and creative for both people.

The one who is ill comes to the physician and in doing so calls out of the physician and one’s self the archetype of the wounded-healer.

• Holding What Cannot be Held

So necessary is this inner work of the caregiver that without it, there is a danger that healing may not occur, not only for the patient but also for the caregiver. Groesbeck reminds us that: “Real cure can only take place if the patient gets in touch with and receives help from his ‘inner healer’. And this can only happen if projections of the healer’s persona are withdrawn. This presupposes that the physician-healer is in touch with his own wounded side.”

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Jurgen Moltmann’s observes that God suffers in the person of Jesus. He suggests that the mysticism of the cross becomes the *conformitas crucis* for the poor and the sick, the oppressed and the crushed:

Suffering in suffering is the lack of love, and the wounds in wounds are the abandonment, and the powerlessness in pain is unbelief. And therefore the suffering of abandonment is overcome by the sufferings of love, which is not afraid of what is sick and ugly, but accepts it to itself in order to heal it. Through his own abandonment by God, the crucified Christ brings God to those who suffer.\textsuperscript{34}

A god who suffers and knows the human experience is one that is accessible to one who suffers. This realization led Eugene Monick in a journey of self discovery. He writes that “Grunewald’s Crucifixion adds a remarkable extension to the Incarnation that is missing in orthodox Christian tradition. Grunewald painted a sick Christ; sick unto death, embellishing the doctrine’s teaching that Christ is body as well as spirit by including an incorporation of experienced evil as well as good within his image [ … ]. It is a vast and novel expression of opposites contained in a Christ figure.

The insights of Moltmann and Monick are at the heart of this understanding the archetype of the wounded healer, where the woundedness of another, even of a god, offers the opportunity for one to discover his or her healing function. David Miller eloquently states in the introduction to Monick’s work, “The author courageously allows the reader to retrace the journey of his homeopathic discovery, the discovery that reveals that blemishes experienced thoroughly may serve to release the soul from its sense of inherited blemish” (xv).

**Part V: The Chaplain as a Wounded Healer**

Each day the chaplain is given the choice to respond to the call of service. In the ordinary, routine and often mundane experiences of healthcare, there are opportunities for the chaplains along with their partners in healthcare to venture forth out of their worldview and to enter the worldview and life of another. The task is often daunting and fraught with mystery as this descent brings the caregiver directly in touch with those movements of soul that may hinder or enhance healing.

To enter into the world of one who is suffering means to suffer with him or her. This is commonly known as compassion. Compassion is

lauded as an integral skill and one of the hallmarks of healing as recognized in the physician, nurse, chaplain and healthcare professional codes of ethics and conduct.

- Listening, the *par excellence* skill of the caregiver, becomes the prerequisite for compassion. Compassion is born from the experience of being a wounded-healer, where one’s understand of suffering and woundedness leads to the understanding of suffering and woundedness in another that promotes healing. Compassion is a spiritual and sacred attitude of spirit that often underlies the practice of many spiritual and religious traditions.

- As such the work of chaplaincy becomes a spiritual practice and a sacred work as the archetype of the wounded healer is made real again in the relationship between chaplain and the one who is ill. Thank you all for your heroic work as wounded-healers.