

Illness in the Family: Coping with Difficult Circumstances
ReCatechism 6
Fr Bohdan Hladio

I. Definition of Sickness: When body does not function properly; physiological imbalances;
Idea of “normal” functioning, and the idea of normality in general

II. Definition of Family: Family normally consists of man/woman (married), children, grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc. i.e., “extended family”; family also consists of people who have no “biological” relationship, such as adopted children or God-children/God-parents.

III. Different kinds of sickness:

- A Sudden/Catastrophic: Cancer, ALS
- B “Regular”: Cold, Flu
- C Chronic: Arthritis, Lupus

D Age related: general weakness; Blood Pressure; Heart Disease; Arthritis; Alzheimers; etc.

E Mental/Psychological: Depression; schizophrenia, etc.

F “Self-inflicted”: as a result of drug abuse; alcohol abuse; STD’s, etc.

G Genetic: Muscular Dystrophy, etc.

IV. Theological meaning of Illness

A Illness and Sin

- ❖ As a result of our own sins (directly, as a result of our own actions such as STD’s)
- ❖ As a result of the sins of others (such as those who become ill due to air or water or earth pollution from industry)

B Illness as a function of the fallenness of the world (sickness and death enter the world through the ancestral sin of Adam and Eve)

C The simple good & complex good (i.e., God is able to bring good things out of evil acts – i.e., the “complex good”, cf. The Problem of Pain, C. S. Lewis, chapter 7)

D Biblical Examples of Sickness in Families:

- ❖ Jairus’ daughter (Mk. 5:22ff)

- ❖ Healing of the epileptic (Mk. 9:17ff)
- ❖ Man Born Blind (Jn. 9:1ff)
- ❖ Peter's Mother-in-law (Lk. 4:37ff, Mk. 1:29ff)

V. Sickness as:

A Opportunity to witness to my faith

When we are faced with a situation where we can do absolutely, we must first of all hold those involved in prayer. We must humbly accept this state of affairs. We must join our personal psychological, emotional, and spiritual suffering unto the suffering of Our Lord. (I . . . fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the Church." Col. 1:24)

B Opportunity to minister to others (physically and spiritually – Gal. 6:2)

C God's "Discipline" to teach us, to draw us closer to Him

D Sickness as a blessing

VI. Illness & Healing

A Biblical examples; biblical teaching

Christ heals (Sozei – to save, to heal)

Healing is first and foremost of spiritual a nature

B Ambivalence of healing and suffering; healing can be a visitation of God, but suffering can also be a visitation of God

C If we are made well it is so that we might minister to others (Peter's Mother-in-law)

D Unction service: it is for the healing of soul and body and the forgiveness of sins

E Confession and healing

VII. No pain, sorrow, sickness in the age to come (Rev. 21:4; Rev. 22:2)