

THE HEALING MINISTRY

Jesus was moved with compassion for all sick people and healed them in God's name, and he entrusted the continuing work of healing to his disciples.

God gives to us the skills of the medical and other healing professions – compassion, love and understanding – all of which can assist in a person's healing. We all suffer at various times from anxiety, depression, illness or pain and eventually we must confront death. In periods such as this, we may seek the help of health professionals, carers, friends, family or priests, depending on the need. Here at St James' we offer support through prayer and care, and the sacraments.

"They told the good news and healed the sick" (Luke 9.6).

PRAYER AND CARE

Through prayer, the Church's sacramental ministry and practical assistance, the clergy and parishioners of St James' actively support those people facing illness and personal crisis. Jesus promises that when we ask in love and faith, our prayers will be heard. At the Eucharist, the names of people seeking help are read out and offered to God.

Our prayers are not just for physical healing but for wholeness – the healing of body, mind and spirit. Physical healing may not take place but God will certainly be with that person. Should the person seeking help wish for confidentiality, their name will be placed on the altar and not read out aloud.

Members of the Guild of St Raphael intercede daily for those asking for prayers. In order to put a name on a prayer list, the clergy need to be advised either personally or through special forms which can be filled in and placed in a marked box, all of which can be found at the entrance to the Chapel of the Holy Spirit in the Church.

Anointing and/or the laying on of hands is offered after the 12.30pm Eucharist every

Thursday. Other times can be arranged by appointment with the clergy.

If home visits are appropriate, then it is necessary to make an appointment with members of the clergy who can offer the desired assistance. Some parishioners are trained for home visits and others regularly visit Sydney Hospital. When practical help is needed, every effort will be made to make this possible. It is essential to remember that you have to make your needs known before any help can be offered.

“Ask, and you will receive” (Luke 11.9).

THE SACRAMENTS

A Sacrament is a sign through which we have contact with God and receive God’s grace. Many everyday actions lovingly performed by ordinary people can be considered as sacramental. We are all channels through which the living Christ can heal. The Church has at its very centre, seven recognised sacraments. They are Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage, Ordination, Reconciliation, Anointing and Holy Communion. The last three sacraments are particularly associated with healing.

RECONCILIATION

During his ministry, Jesus spent much of his time healing the sick in body, mind and spirit. He invited people to confess their sins and he absolved them. Sin and sickness are sometimes linked. Unforgiven sin causes unhappiness and detracts from a person’s wellbeing.

The sacrament of reconciliation is an opportunity for people to confess their sins before God and to receive absolution. This can give the peace of mind that can pass all understanding and opens the way for healing.

ANOINTING

Jesus laid hands on people and healed them. Now, through laying on of hands and anointing with Holy Oil, people are strengthened and encouraged, whether they are frail, anxious, fearful or ill. This sign of God’s loving kindness offers reassurance.

HOLY COMMUNION

At the Eucharist or Holy Communion we meet Jesus in the bread and wine. He shares our suffering and our joys and we are fed. We can lay our concerns and anxieties at his feet, knowing that his love for us is unconditional and forever, and that He will not abandon us.

With the firm assurance of God's love, the sick often find much joy and peace within themselves which will assist them in dealing with their problems and enable healing to take place.

"Be assured, I am with you always" (Matthew 28.20).