

**Chaplain's Assembly – Father Philip Murphy SSC**  
**5<sup>th</sup> November 2014**  
**“Healing”**

**Reading: Luke 7:18-23**

**A narrated version of this talk as a PowerPoint presentation can be found here:**  
<http://youtu.be/bp5Li48xPDE>

*Again a reminder that for anyone interested in joining a course of preparation for baptism, there will be a short meeting in the Chapel today at 12.40pm.*

*Also there is a poster outside the Library and the Chapel about visiting speakers at the Tuesday Eucharist on the second Tuesday of each month. It begins next Tuesday at 1.00pm with Father Robert Martin who will be preaching. A number of you will know him from his time here as Chaplain of St Paul's before moving to the Cathedral. All are welcome to this celebration.*

This week our theme at Assembly is “Healing.” So to start: what do all of the following hospitals have in Common?

The Alice Ho Nethersole Hospital; the Canossa; the Caritas Medical Centre; the Evangel Hospital; Haven of Hope Hospital; the Adventist Hospital; Our Lady of Maryknoll Hospital; Hong Kong Baptist Hospital; the Pamela Youde Nethersole Hospital; Precious Blood Hospital; St Paul's Hospital; St Teresa's Hospital; the Tsuen Wan Adventist Hospital and the United Christian Hospital?

All of them are local hospitals which are either fully run or run in partnership with the Church.

In countries all around the world the Church is not only strongly involved in education and schools, but also hospitals. In some countries the health sector would be in danger of falling apart if the Church stopped its work in hospitals and healthcare.

Since the healing ministry of Jesus, pictured on the left here, and the continuation of that ministry by the Apostles (and on the right is a picture of St Paul healing in the name of Jesus), the Church has always taken seriously the ministry of healing. Both physically and spiritually.

Healing also finds its way into the Sacraments of the Church. So far this term I have spoken about Baptism, Confirmation and Reconciliation - three of the seven Sacraments. A fourth one is the Anointing of the Sick.

And you should almost know by heart now that a Sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. It is something we can see which gives us God's grace which we cannot see.

The teaching of Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick comes directly from the Bible where we hear in the letter of James these words: Is any among you sick? Let him call for the priests of the

church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. (James 5:14-15).

So the outward and visible sign of the Sacrament does exactly that. First of all the priest lays his hands on the sick person and prays for them. Then he anoints them with oil, first of all on the forehead and then on the palms of each hand. This can happen anywhere, not just in a Church. It can take place at home or in hospital. The outward and visible sign is the laying his hands on the person and anointing them with oil. The inward and spiritual gift is God's grace to the sick person.

This Sacrament does not necessarily hand out physical healing as we might imagine, instead it gives grace to the sick person. Sometimes simply the grace to have the strength to live with a sickness which may never go away. Sometimes it does work and help towards healing. But it is a Sacrament which works hand in hand with the physical healing ministry of the Church, hospitals, doctors, nurses and so on.

*A film clip was then shown which highlighted the points above.*

Most importantly of all, the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick reminds us that Jesus himself suffered. When we, or those whom we love suffer, we know that that suffering is united with Jesus and his suffering and that there is the promise of new life and hope through him.

There is a story about an old man who was sitting outside his house when it started to rain. There was so much rain that it started to flood and he was soon surrounded by water. A boat came by and the people on the boat said "Come with us, we will save you". The man said "No, God will save me." Then a helicopter came by and they called down to the man and said "Come with us, we will save you." The man said "No, God will save me." Finally, a rescue plane came around and they called down "Come with us, we will save you." The man said, "No, God will save me." Well the man then was drowned in the flood. When he went to heaven he asked God "Why didn't you save me." God said "I sent you a boat, a helicopter and a plane. What more do you want?"

With healing we need to remember that the gift of healing is one which is both physical and spiritual. God has given us both the gift and the skill of medicine and the men and women who research and work in the medical field. He has also given the promise of his grace in the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. Both work together and ensure us of the healing hand of God physically and spiritually in our lives.