

Sunday, September 18, 2011

Sisters and Brothers of Our Parish Family,

Recently, some parishioners approached me about the Church's position on Reiki. This was something I had never even heard of before. So, after a bit of research, I learned that Reiki is a Japanese healing technique that involves the practitioner's placing his or her hands in certain positions on the patient's body to facilitate the flow of "universal life energy" from practitioner to patient.

In March 2009, the U. S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on Doctrine conducted a study to determine whether this was compatible with the Catholic Faith. The committee concluded that *"Reiki therapy finds no support either in...natural science or in Christian belief"* and warned that *"a Catholic who puts his or her trust in Reiki would be operating in the realm of superstition."*

The Catholic Church recognizes two kinds of healing: *natural healing* accomplished by the forces of nature assisted by medical science, and *supernatural healing* accomplished miraculously by God and not by natural forces. Some proponents mistakenly confuse Reiki with supernatural healing from God, claiming it to be the same as healing by Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

But Reiki healing is understood to be under the control of the Reiki practitioner. For a Catholic, our prayers for healing are directed to God, Who alone truly heals by divine power. From time to time, God grants a special charismatic gift of healing to certain individuals, but this does not give them control over the divine power to heal. They, too, must pray to God to ask for a healing, recognizing that the decision belongs to God, not to them.

During our lives, we are all in need of healing. Every day, Catholic health care workers seek to bring help and healing to people, using the latest scientific knowledge and medical practices. Every day we turn to God in prayer, seeking healing for ourselves and others, trusting in God's plan for us. As people of faith, we know that Christ continues to bring us healing and hope.

Peace and Blessings,

Father Conrad