

Health Care Today: Whom do we Really Care about? Interventions for Promoting Healing and Hope

Brother Ignatius Perkins*

Department of Nursing, Spalding University, Louisville, USA

*Corresponding author: Brother Ignatius Perkins, Department of Nursing, Spalding University, Louisville, USA, E-mail: ignatius.perkins@opeast.org

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Description

In the article, published by the Catholic Medical Association's Linacre Quarterly [1]. I addressed several key concerns presenting draconian threats to human dignity, freedom and human flourishing and health services in the United States, e.g. moral relativism; dehumanization and commodification of the person and the erosion of human dignity; primacy for caring for technology versus caring for the person; financial algorithms versus urgent human need; anemic responses in caring for the uninsured and unemployed, persons of color, the homeless, and the unwanted, to name a few. More recently we have and experienced and witnessed the catastrophic impact of COVID-19 pandemic on every segment of our society. Among these new experiences are our wounded healers, our health care workers, who bear the burden of being powerless in reversing the course of this global pandemic while also, placing themselves at risk. These enduring threats to human dignity, freedom, and human flourishing continue to challenge every aspect of human life.

Interventions for promoting healing and hope

As responsible stewards of life how might we begin to address and respond to these serious questions? As I have written elsewhere [2], I would like to suggest these practical interventions and strategies as means to reclaim moral courage and fulfill our responsibility to care for others in our world, and to begin the process of defending human life, protecting freedom and promoting human flourishing all leading to healing, hope and an enduring peace.

- Design and implement listening sessions in order to share the wounds, the pain, multiple losses, grief, and anger experienced by individuals, families, communities and health care professionals as wounded healers and to reaffirm and implement the power of the trilogy of health care (human dignity, freedom and human flourishing) among individuals and communities.
- Provide comprehensive professional resources (spiritual, psychological, emotional, physical, pastoral, ethical, social work, financial) to help others journey through their experiences of grieving, anxiety, depression, those who have lost hope and self-confidence and reclaim confidence as instruments of healing and hope.

- In collaboration with public and private organizations implement strategies that will reach out especially to those have become isolated, withdrawn, feel abandoned, the unwanted, the unloved and to those who have little reason to hope.
- Establish interdisciplinary networks that provide long-term counseling, other services, and resources as we reclaim the trilogy of health care (human dignity, freedom and human flourishing) among all persons.
- Collaborate with local and regional health care systems, colleagues in the health professions, and civic leaders to construct a long term plan for sustained continuing care and rehabilitation.

The future of health care: Whom do we really care about?

Whom do we really care about can be summarized in this promise that we can make to ourselves, to one another, to our families and our colleagues, and especially to all those in our world who are suffering in any way-to the homeless, to persons of color and of many cultures, to children and the elderly, single parents, the poor, those who bear the stigma of an illness, to those who have been harmed by others, to the affluent, the unwanted and even the unloved as well victims of discrimination and of indifference.

Regardless of whom you are, your gender, race, ethnicity, or religious persuasion, regardless of your illness or your life experiences. I am promising you my commitment that I will care with you. I will try to heal your pain, to ameliorate your suffering, to help you accept the limitations posed by the ravages of your illness. I promise that I will accept your invitation to be with you when you are afraid, alone or dying, and to never abandon you along this journey.

References

1. Ignatius P (2021) Health Care Today: Whom Do We Really Care About? Linacre Q 88: 32-36.
2. Ignatius P (2020) Wounded healers: Bearers of hope and healing. Health Progress Fall.