

CARING WITH FAITH

**TRAINING
MINISTERS TO
THE SICK**



LEADER'S GUIDE

PLEASE NOTE: This leader's guide was originally written for those using this video program in its VHS format. Those now using this program on DVD may find some references that do not apply to their use (i.e., directions for locating segments, time notations, etc.). We trust that both VHS- and DVD-users will find this guide a valuable resource.

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Catholic Update Video

The Use of Video in Faith Formation

Jesus used the “media” of his day to teach. He was a master storyteller. His preaching is full of imagery. His parables are calculated to engage his audience. Through the ages, Christian teachers and preachers have followed Jesus in the creative proclamation of his message.

From the culture of Jesus’ time, heavily dependent on *oral* communication—to the advent of *print* communication—to our own time and its dependence on electronic media—Christian teachers have adapted their proclamation to each new medium.

Media scholars like Marshall McLuhan remind us of the impact of the medium on the message it carries. *How* we communicate affects *what* we communicate. Electronic media offer us new ways to tell the story of our faith. Father Pierre Babin points out (see *The New Era in Religious Communications*, Pierre Babin with Mercedes Iannone, Fortress Press, Minneapolis: 1991) that the message, as well as the sender and receiver, will be re-shaped in the telling.

Catechesis, as a part of the total evangelization process, must touch the learners’ hearts and shine the light of faith on their lives. It must connect to the learners’ experience or risk being discarded as irrelevant. To be effective, catechists must learn how to make the best use of the electronic media available in our culture, aware of the particular medium’s strengths and weaknesses.

Video is a very popular, familiar and accessible part of our electronic culture. It draws us in, captures our imaginations and touches us on a deep, emotional level. As it speaks to our experience and utilizes several of

our senses, its message is more likely to be heard and remembered. By integrating quality video programs into the catechetical process, catechists can share the message more effectively.

At the same time, as television becomes a more pervasive part of our lives, we can be lulled into thinking that it can do everything for us—inform, entertain, shop, even worship. The reality is that it can't and shouldn't do everything. As Pierre Babin emphasizes, electronic media function differently than print media. They appeal first to the *emotional content* of our faith rather than the *intellectual content*. Video cannot begin to convey the amount of information print can. It cannot replace the live presence and personal witness of the catechist. But in a catechetical setting, it can be a powerful part of the “mix of media” used in proclaiming the message.

How effectively video—or any electronic medium—is used in the catechetical setting depends primarily on how prepared the catechist is to use it:

- The catechist should select a video program (or section of a video) based on the audience, the purpose, and the availability of competent teachers and other resources and activities to support the theme.
- Sufficient time should be available to introduce the video and to process the experience.
- A preview of the video is essential to determine the best use of the program with a particular group.

Catechists must realize that they control the use of video in their sessions. They might approach a video program in one of two ways: as a skeleton on which to build a presentation or as a way to “enflesh” an existing skeleton.

A video program well-tailored to the needs of a group might be used in its entirety. At other times,

catechists may creatively manipulate the video to fit their needs:

- An excerpt may be taken from a longer piece to illustrate a point.
- A video may be shown with the *sound off* to highlight an aspect of the program.
- The “pause” button can be used freely to interject explanations and examples or to elicit reactions.
- The program or excerpt may be repeated to emphasize a point.

The producers of this video program have attempted to craft both medium and message with an awareness of the power of the medium as well as its limitations. They encourage those who use it to study this guide and become familiar with ways to allow this program to supplement their own sharing of the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.

Introduction to the Series

Catholic Update Video is a video magazine resource designed for use in the RCIA, catechist formation, sacrament programs for parents, faith-sharing groups, study groups, ministry training and high school religious education. *Catholic Update Video* draws from Catholic life and practice to present a single topic in a “video magazine” format with four distinct segments—story, witness, teaching and musical reflection.

Catholic Update Video has been designed with today’s learner in mind. Its segments are short and can stand alone or be used with others in the program. The format is flexible, making it useful in a variety of group settings as well as for individual viewing. The emphasis is on what video can do best, namely touch us through story (*story segment*), testimony (*witness segment*) and song (*musical reflection segment*) with images and the emotions they carry. But a more “didactic” approach (*teaching segment*) respects the need to convey a concise core of information.

The general model for catechetical process (life experience, message or doctrine, response) is respected by the order of the four segments, although at times a catechist may choose to use them alone or out of sequence:

- Each program begins with a **story segment** designed to draw viewers in and help them connect their life experience to the faith-topic.
- The testimony of real-life Catholics in the **witness segment** helps viewers reflect on their own life experience and prepare for group sharing.
- Our teacher briefly highlights some aspects of the topic in the **teaching segment**. Relevant images help to illustrate the points being made. (*This segment is not intended to treat a topic exhaustively nor substitute for a more thorough presentation.*)

- Viewers are invited to respond in prayer using the **musical reflection segment**.

The program's host provides a context for each segment. This is designed to help viewers who will see the program from beginning to end. Catechists who use segments individually or out of sequence should prepare their own lead-in. On-screen graphics provide viewers with a question for reflection or sharing between segments.

This leader's guide is an important tool for making the best use of this video program.

- It includes a **Summary** and **Suggestions for Use** for each segment.
- **Questions for Sharing** follow the *story, witness* and *teaching segments*; facilitators can choose from them or use them as models for developing their own questions.
- The **Suggestions for Use** after the *musical reflection segment* provide suggestions for using this segment in a prayer setting.
- **Resources for Further Study** are listed at the end of this guide.
- Approximate times are noted for where each segment begins. (*If the VCR is equipped with an "elapsed time" counter; reset the counter to 0:00:00 at the beginning of the tape and fast-forward to the time listed for the beginning of the desired segment. If the VCR does not have an "elapsed time" counter; the facilitator can fast-forward in the "review" mode [i.e., while the VCR is in "play"] to find the gray screen and Catholic Update Video logo that indicate the start of a segment.*)

The "Caring With Faith" programs are a "mini series" within the larger *Catholic Update Video* series. They

are designed for caregivers, support groups, families, pastoral training sessions and healthcare settings. Each video explores the ways Christians enter into the mystery of human suffering.

CARING WITH FAITH

TRAINING MINISTERS TO THE SICK

Background for the Program

Jesus took special interest in the sick people of his day. For many of them, their encounter with Jesus was a moment of conversion. In addition to healing their physical bodies, he offered them forgiveness of their sins. As God, he had the power to heal all of the sick in the crowds that gathered around him, yet he chose to heal them individually through personal encounters.

Jesus' actions tell us that God cares about us personally. He set an example of loving service to those in need. He asks us to follow his example.

In many Catholic parishes today, parishioners committed to "caring with faith" visit the sick and shut-in members of the community. Each Sunday, parishioners take the Eucharist to those unable to come to Mass. Others visit homes or healthcare facilities during the week. Their ministry comprises one of the corporal works of mercy.

The ministry of those who visit the sick is a ministry of presence. Through their presence they represent the community, the Body of Christ, and thus bring the presence of Jesus to the sick person. The ministers embody the care of the community for its sick members.

When skilled visitors to the sick listen, they "listen with the heart." Even those sick persons who have a strong and caring network of family and friends may need the objective ear of someone outside that network to help them sort out their feelings. They may need someone to help them pray about their concerns or to sit with them and hold their hand without offering advice.

Purpose

This program is designed specifically for training ministers to the sick. It contains the same four segments found in other videos in the series with some minor differences. The story and witness segments are integrated to facilitate use in training sessions. The musical reflection segment is itself a prayer for those who minister to the sick.

Some users may wish to incorporate segments of this video into an existing training program. Others may find this video a good “skeleton” on which to build a training program.

Overview

None of us has all the answers, nor can we meet all the needs of the people we visit. Similarly, one training tape can't possibly prepare ministers for all the situations they will face. What we offer here will stimulate discussion and further exploration of how to be truly present to those we visit.

It's important to draw on the wisdom of those who are experienced in caring for people wrestling with illness or the special needs of aging. Three such “wisdom” figures, veteran pastoral care chaplains, will offer their insights in response to three fictional stories of pastoral care. After each story, the three chaplains give their reactions to what the pastoral visitor did and said in the story, pointing out some general principles to keep in mind.

The program continues with a *teaching segment* presented by Patti Normile, an experienced chaplain, educator and author. She shares some essentials to guide viewers in compassionate caring with faith. The concluding music and image reflection is a prayer for those involved in the ministry of visiting the sick.

Audience

The intended audience of this program is those in training for the ministry of pastoral care. Ideally, training for this ministry (and viewing of this video) takes place in a group setting for more fruitful sharing of ideas, feelings and responses. Where a group setting is not possible, the producers strongly encourage personal interaction between an experienced pastoral minister and the trainee at the time of viewing, rather than simply sending this video program home for private viewing.

STORY AND WITNESS SEGMENTS

Summary

Vignette One: Catherine

(Begins approximately 03:31 into program.)

Catherine is in her 70's, recuperating from a broken hip. She is unhappy in the nursing home and wants to return to her own house. She is a widow and mother of two. One of her sons was killed in an automobile accident while in his 30's. The other son, Robert, is responsible for her care. He insisted that she move to the nursing home after she broke her hip. In addition to Catherine's health and age, her old neighborhood is no longer safe, nor can she care for her house and yard.

Catherine is a religious person but is unsure how to relate to God in her present situation. She is angry - about her son's death years ago, her current helplessness, and moving from her old home. She feels unable to pray in this situation; she doesn't know how to relate to God.

Her negative feelings are very near the surface when Carol, the parish pastoral visitor, stops in. Despite these feelings, Catherine is a kind and genuinely religious

woman who wants to grow closer to God. She will be responsive to someone who tries to understand her.

Carol, the pastoral visitor, is a volunteer. She is in her mid-50's. She is not a trained counselor and has not received much training in pastoral care situations. She has a caring spirit and is comfortable praying aloud with those she visits. At times she may be a little too eager to help with suggestions and solutions.

The story shows an exchange between Catherine and Carol in Catherine's room in the nursing home. It illustrates the challenge of facing the strong emotions a person might experience and express in the situation of sickness or confinement and how to relate these emotions to our relationship with God.

Chaplains' Response: Catherine

The chaplains comment on several aspects of the visit:

- the need to listen to and honor feelings;
- the need to empty oneself of one's personal agenda in order to receive what another wants to share;
- the importance of honesty when the visitor makes mistakes;
- the need to allow the visit to unfold, not anticipating the needs or reactions of the patient, not assuming intimacy;
- the need to invite, not advise; and
- the role of prayer as a meaningful conclusion of a visit.

Vignette Two: Paul

(Begins approximately 13:11 into program.)

Paul is a 15-year old who is receiving chemotherapy treatment for an inoperable brain tumor. His prognosis is not good; he may live one or two more years if the treatments are successful. He is receiving chemotherapy when Carl, a deacon and hospital visitor

from his church, drops by to see him.

Paul knows Carl best through his involvement with the parish youth group. Paul was an active leader of the group until his condition was diagnosed six months ago. His involvement included both social and spiritual activities.

Paul is the middle of five children and seems to be the calm center of the storm for his family. He is sensitive to the challenge his illness is for his parents and siblings and wants to help everyone else deal with it. He deals with it himself in his quiet moments. There are times when he is scared, but he puts on a brave front.

Paul knows his condition is tough on his friends too. Despite Paul's efforts to make things easy for them, they don't seem comfortable around him although they are concerned about him. They communicate their concern through Carl, the deacon who visits Paul.

Carl is married with several children of his own. His mother died last year, and he spent a good deal of time with her as she was dying. He is shy and a bit insecure about the pastoral part of his role as deacon. He feels strongly his responsibility as a representative of the Church, and so tends to rely on his theological training when in a difficult situation.

The scene that takes place between Paul and Carl shows the need to deal honestly and sensitively with fears about dying. It also shows the need many sick people have for meaningful connections: with past involvements, friends and the pastoral visitor.

Chaplains' Response: Paul

The chaplains comment on several aspects of the visit:

- the need to talk “from” personal experience not “of” or “about” one’s experience;

Prayer Before Making a Pastoral Visit

Introductory Prayer

Lord, I thank you and praise you for calling me to visit, in your name, those who suffer from illness, injury or the challenges of aging. I know you do not send me forth alone but that you will walk with me in Spirit as I touch the lives of those experiencing pain or loss, anxiety or anger, frustration or despair.

Intercessions

Knowing my presence is only a shadow of your loving presence with those I visit, I offer my prayers to you. I pray...

- For respect and reverence for the life of each individual I visit.
- For a listening heart and ears that hear the messages that transcend mere words.
- For your guidance that will provide me with wisdom, right judgment and understanding.
- For an abundance of peace, hope and joy to spread among your people, Lord.
- For faith in your promise to be with me always.
- For your blessings of strength and patience on all caregivers who tend to the needs of the sick and suffering.

[Add personal petitions here.]

Concluding Prayer

Thank you, loving God, for hearing my prayers. Bless me and send me forth assured in faith that you are with me as I visit your sick ones; those who are injured; the frail of body, mind and spirit; the elderly who bear the burdens of old age. I go in the Spirit of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen and Alleluia.

- the importance of allowing the patient as much control as possible (e.g., ask before sitting on bed);
- the need to trust in God's presence with the visitor so that one doesn't worry so much about what to say;
- the importance of knowing one's own feelings about death before visiting a dying patient;
- the need to take advantage of opportunities to reassure patients;
- the need to use *human* theology, not *dogmatic* theology; and
- the need to end visits with a prayer, blessing or ritual.

Vignette Three: Betty and Jim

(Begins approximately 24:06 into program.)

Our third story is about Betty and Jim, a retired married couple. Jim is incapacitated by illness and must use a walker. Betty cares for him. Before Jim's illness, both were active, getting out for social events and travel. Since Jim's illness, Betty's life has revolved around his care. Their only child, Anne, lives two hours away with her family. She brings her children for a visit twice a month and takes Betty out for shopping then.

Betty is consumed with her care of Jim and doesn't want to admit that her own needs might have a place in their relationship. Jim understands Betty's needs but is at a loss as to how to help her. He's already tried to convince her to get out of the house once in a while, that he will be able to manage for a few hours, but she will hear none of it.

Patricia is a parish volunteer whose work experience includes being a manager in a department store. She is part a group that brings Communion to shut-ins and nursing home residents. Patricia considers herself a problem-solver who ought to be of help in most situations.

This story explores the issue of attempting to “fix” a situation and the limitations facing pastoral visitors. In addition, the inclusion of the Communion service explores the role of this sacramental ministry which may be part of a visit to the sick.

Chaplains’ Response: Betty and Jim

The chaplains comment on several aspects of the visit:

- the issue of caregiver control, trying to maintain some control over their lives;
- the issue of pastoral visitor control, trying to “fix” things;
- relating to the in-home caregiver as an important part of visiting a homebound person;
- the difference between visiting and advising;
- the celebration of Communion as part of the prayer that concludes a visit;
- the role of a pastoral visitor, limits of the ministry and individual ministers; and
- the need to be receptive and listening.

Suggestions for Use

Those training to be pastoral care visitors are commonly drawn to this ministry because of personal experience with sickness and suffering, their own or that of a loved one. They may have benefited personally from the caring presence of a pastoral care visitor in a time of need. They may have had a poor experience with a visitor or felt the absence of a visitor when it was desired. Regardless of past experience, their common hope is to offer comfort to those in need—the sick and those who love and care for them.

As good-hearted, caring persons, those training to become pastoral care visitors are usually anxious about “doing it right” and saying the right thing. They come

to training for this ministry with a desire and need for guidance. Helping them anticipate the kinds of situations they may encounter and discussing possible responses will give them insights to apply to the real-life visits they will soon make. Viewing these vignettes of different pastoral care situations and hearing the responses of veteran chaplains will help them develop their own style of visiting with comfort, confidence and, most importantly, compassion.

These vignettes and the chaplains' responses have been arranged for ease of use in training situations. Trainers may choose to use all three stories in one training session but may find this to be too much to cover adequately in a short time period. We suggest using the three vignettes in separate sessions on different days or spread throughout a single training day.

When several training sessions are scheduled, an individual story may be the central piece around which an entire session is built. We strongly recommend that viewers stop the tape to discuss the vignette before hearing the chaplains' response. It is likely that those being trained will be affirmed when they hear the chaplains make some of the same points they discovered on their own. Role-playing the scene over again, incorporating changes the group and chaplains suggest, is an excellent way for the trainees to practice using the insights gained from the vignettes.

It is important that trainees realize that no one book, video or individual is going to have all the right answers to every situation of pastoral care. Their encounters will be as unique and varied as the individuals involved - themselves and the persons they will visit. Keeping the chaplains' key points in mind will help guide trainees in their response. They will also draw on the gifts of their own personality, the

strength of their faith and their ability to listen with their hearts.

The following questions may be helpful in facilitating discussion of the vignettes both before and after viewing the chaplains' response.

Questions for Sharing

(Before hearing the chaplains' response)

1. What is your reaction to the way the pastoral care visitor handled the situation?
2. What did the visitor do well?
3. What errors did the visitor make? Was he/she able to correct the errors?
4. How might you have approached the person(s) differently?
5. What aspect of this pastoral care setting might cause you to be uncomfortable? If so, how will you deal with that discomfort?

(After hearing the chaplains' response)

6. Is there anything the chaplains missed that you think was significant?
7. Do you disagree with anything the chaplains said? What personal knowledge or experience leads you to a different attitude or approach?
8. What further help do you need to deal with the issues raised?

TEACHING SEGMENT

(Begins approximately 31:57 into program.)

Summary

Patti Normile, an experienced chaplain, educator and author, shares some encouragement and guidance for

those in training to become pastoral care visitors. An outline of her presentation follows:

- I. Visiting the sick is a ministry of presence:
 - A. As a Christian friend to walk with another through the wilderness of illness or injury.
 - B. To help Christ be born again in those who struggle with illness, age or injury.
 - C. To bring hope, offer the healing power of prayer and bring the Eucharist.
- II. Ministry to the sick is a special calling.
 - A. Some are called through the experience of their own illness or that of a loved one.
 - B. Some respond to Jesus' words, "I was . . . ill and you cared for me . . ."
- III. Confirm this calling through prayer and with someone who understands pastoral care of the sick.
 - A. Investigate your own experience of suffering.
 - B. Explore your motivation, gifts, expectations and support for this ministry.

Several questions are offered on-screen to assist in exploring the motivation of a potential minister to the sick:

 - 1. Where is God in my experience of suffering?
 - 2. Who am I as I choose this work?
 - 3. Why am I seeking this ministry now?
 - 4. What do I hope to gain? To give?
 - 5. What do I hope to learn?
 - 6. Who will guide and support me?
- IV. Your identity as a pastoral care visitor emerges from your Christian Baptism.
- V. You bring patients a variety of gifts:
 - A. confidentiality
 - B. respecting and accepting each individual

C. listening with your heart

D. empathy

VI. We receive gifts through involvement in this ministry.

A. We build our understanding of the meaning of illness, injury, loss and grief.

B. We become more skilled in being present to those in need.

C. We learn about ourselves, patients and families, sickness and health.

Several questions are given on-screen to assist pastoral visitors in evaluating their visits to the sick:

1. What did I do well?

2. How can I improve?

3. Who can help me improve?

D. We discover God in amazing people and places.

Suggestions for Use

Patti provides a general overview of the ministry of pastoral care visitors. She speaks directly to those being trained for this ministry but does not go into detail about its “how-to’s.” These need to be handled by the in-house trainer who should tailor the instruction to the kinds of visits those being trained will make. Is this a ministry of visiting those in hospitals, nursing homes, private homes, or any and all of these? Does this ministry also involve being a minister of the Eucharist?

Patti’s presentation can be used as an orientation to the ministry of visiting the sick. Some facilitators may choose to show her entire presentation and follow it with their own. Others may find it effective to stop the tape at various points and add their own additional information. Trainers may want to discuss the questions

which explore motivation with potential ministers. Following initial experiences, trainers can use the questions for evaluating visits as further tools to assist in training.

Questions for Sharing

1. When have I experienced someone being truly present to me? How did it make me feel?
2. What “noises” do I need to tune out (judgmental attitude, prejudices, need to be heard, need to fix things, desire to give advice, discomfort with tears, etc.) in order to be able to “listen with my heart”?
3. What experiences and people have been part of my calling to this ministry?
4. What personal gifts do I have to offer to those I will visit?
5. What do I hope to receive as a result of being involved in this ministry?

MUSICAL REFLECTION SEGMENT

(Begins approximately 37:51 into program.)

Summary

This segment contains a prayer for those who are involved in the ministry of pastoral care visitor. Reflective music and images accompany it.

Every ministry requires adequate preparation, ongoing formation and prayer. Ministers need to pray with and for one another as well as for themselves and the people they serve. This prayer contains several petitions for the attitudes and skills needed in this ministry. It follows the familiar format of general intercessions from the Catholic celebration of Eucharist with the response, “Lord, hear our prayer.”

Introductory Prayer

Leader: Lord, we thank you and praise you for calling us to visit, in your name, those who suffer from illness, injury or the challenges of aging. We know you do not send us forth alone but that you will walk with us in Spirit as we touch the lives of those experiencing pain or loss, anxiety or anger, frustration or despair.

Intercessions

Knowing our presence is only a shadow of your loving presence with those we visit, we offer our prayers to you. And we respond, "Lord, hear our prayer."

- For respect and reverence for the life of each individual we visit, we pray...
- For listening hearts and ears that hear the messages that transcend mere words, we pray...
- For your guidance that will provide us with wisdom, right judgment and understanding, we pray...
- For an abundance of peace, hope and joy to spread among your people, Lord, we pray...
- For faith in your promise to be with us always, we pray...
- For your blessings of strength and patience on caregivers who tend to the needs of the sick and suffering, we pray...

[Facilitator and pastoral care visitors may add petitions.]

Concluding Prayer

Thank you, loving God, for hearing our prayers. Bless us and send us forth assured in faith that you are with us as we visit your sick ones; those who are injured; the frail of body, mind and spirit; the elderly who bear the burdens of old age. We go in the Spirit of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen and Alleluia.

Suggestions for Use

This prayer may be used to conclude a training session. The intercessions may be used in a blessing (“Order for the Blessing of Those Who Exercise Pastoral Service,” 1808-1826, *Book of Blessings*) or commissioning service (“Order for the Commissioning of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion,” 1871-1896, *Book of Blessings*). Some may choose to offer this prayer whenever ministers gather to pray before making their visits. Individual ministers may use the adapted form of this prayer (pages 13-14) for their personal prayer of preparation before a visit.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

1) Scripture references:

OLD TESTAMENT

Prayers for the Suffering: Psalms 6 (supplication in time of trial); 22 (suffering and hopes of the upright); 23 (the good Shepherd); 30 (thanksgiving after mortal danger); 31 (prayer in time of ordeal); 38 (prayer in distress); 40 (song of praise and prayer for help); 69:1-4 (lament); 70 (a cry of distress); 71 (a prayer in old age); 86 (prayer in time of trial); 102 (prayer in misfortune); 131 (childlike trust); 142 (prayer in persecution). The Book of Job is a story of faithfulness despite suffering.

NEW TESTAMENT

Jesus Heals: Matthew 4:23-25; 8; 9; 12:9-14; 14:34-36; 15:21-31; 17:14-20; 20:29-34; Mark 1:40-45; 2:1-12; 3:1-6; 5; 6:53-56; 7:31-37; 8:22-26; 9:14-29; 10:46-52; Luke 4:31-37, 40-41; 5:17-26; 6:6-11, 17-19; 7:1-17; 8:26-56; 9:37-43; 13:10-17;

14:1-6; 17:11-19; 18:35-43; John 4:46-54; 5; 9; 11:1-44.

Our Healing Ministry: Matthew 25:31-46 (when I was sick, you visited me); Mark 6:7-13 (apostles healing); Mark 16:15-18 (commissioning of apostles); John 13:12-15 (Jesus' model of service); John 20:21 (As the Father has sent me, so I send you); 1 Corinthians 12:9, 28, 30 (healing as a spiritual gift).

On Suffering: Matthew 10:37-39 (take up cross); Romans 8:17 (if we suffer with him, we will be glorified); 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 (power is made perfect in weakness); Colossians 1:24 (rejoice in my sufferings); 2 Timothy 2:11-12 (if we die with him, we will live with him); 1 Peter 4:13 (share in sufferings of Christ); Hebrews 2:15 (freedom from fear of death).

2) *Catechism of the Catholic Church* references:

The *Catechism* addresses sickness and suffering in its treatment of Anointing of the Sick in 1499-1532.

3) Available from St. Anthony Messenger Press

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<http://Catalog.AmericanCatholic.org> for additional print (magazine, newsletter, book and pamphlet), audio (book and presentation) and video (DVD and VHS) resources to support your efforts in faith formation and personal spiritual growth.

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presentation on the message or doctrine.)

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CARING WITH FAITH

FACING MY OWN SUFFERING AND LOSS

OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

The “Caring with Faith” programs are a “mini series” within the larger *Catholic Update Video* series. They are designed for caregivers, support groups, families, pastoral training sessions and healthcare settings. Each video explores the ways Christians enter into the mystery of human suffering.

In times of trouble and difficulty it is often comforting to talk with someone who has had a similar experience. In times of personal suffering, we look to God for help. Jesus knows human suffering quite intimately. We can find comfort in knowing that by becoming one of us, Jesus accepted all aspects of the human condition—suffering included.

Jesus was sensitive to the needs of those who suffered—not only those with physical ailments but also those who suffered from poverty, oppression and prejudice. He was no stranger to personal loss. He wept when his friend Lazarus died. His closest friends often did not understand him, and even abandoned and denied him at significant moments. His suffering and death on the cross were the culmination of a life that didn’t run from suffering but that sought to find God present in times of sorrow and pain.

Times of suffering can be times of revelation for us. We can come to know ourselves in new ways as we face new challenges. As the security of our old way of life is shaken or stripped away, we may find new ways to cope and new strengths in our personalities. We

discover how important others are to us, not only as they help us with our physical needs but also as they listen to us and accept our feelings and fears. We may come to know God more intimately as we face our personal limitations and realize anew our dependence on God.

This program has been created to offer you ways to reflect on the limitations of illness and the burdens imposed by physical suffering. It was created by people of faith, who have reflected on the meaning of suffering when it comes in the lives of those who believe in God.

So much of the spiritual life is built on stories of faith. Telling stories is one of the ways we cope in life. Our *story segment* contains the true story of Camilla Warrick. Her physical discovery of breast cancer led her on an inner journey, a journey of the spirit. We've recreated her story with the help of actors. She retells her experience in the taped interview that accompanies the re-creations.

Human experience tells us that we learn from suffering in two ways: as we experience it ourselves and as we care for others. In our *witness segment* we hear from those who have walked with loved ones in times of suffering and the approach of death.

When it comes to illness or other forms of suffering, we seldom have much choice in the matter. In the *teaching segment*, Patti Normile, stresses that we can choose what we do with our suffering. As a hospital chaplain for many years, Patti listened to those who were suffering. She will share some of the insights she's gained.

Our program concludes with a prayer in music and imagery in the *musical reflection segment*. As we listen to an instrumental version of "Amazing Grace," we'll see four vignettes portraying the message that despite suffering and apparent defeat, hope and life and love can prevail and triumph.

Audience

This program is intended for an adult or teenage audience. It may include

- those who are experiencing suffering and loss as a result of illness or injury. It may be viewed by individuals (home, healthcare facility) or in group settings (parish, healthcare facility, family).
- those who walk with others in their suffering: caregivers, healthcare workers, family members and pastoral care visitors.

STORY SEGMENT: “A More Precious Life”

(Begins approximately 03:34 into program.)

Summary

Camilla Warrick, a successful professional woman—journalist, wife and mother—tells her story of discovering she had breast cancer. This physical discovery led her on an inner journey, a journey of the spirit. We’ve recreated her story with the help of actors. She retells her experience in the taped interview that accompanies the re-creations.

Camilla had been aware of hardness in her left breast for several years. She had had a mammogram and yearly breast exams, but nothing unusual was ever found. Despite the doctor’s assurance that everything seemed normal, Camilla was troubled by it. At her husband’s urging, she decided to contact her doctor again for another mammogram.

Her doctor checked the mammogram and said that all he saw was dense breast tissue—not cancer. She was happy to hear that but then invited the doctor to look over her shoulder to see what she saw in the shower. She raised her arm to show him how one of her

breasts was deformed. He decided to contact the radiologist who had read the mammogram and get back to her.

When the doctor called a week later, he told her that a biopsy should be done. The biopsy revealed Stage III cancer and the need for immediate surgery. The mastectomy went well, but 10 of the 11 lymph nodes tested also had cancer. Chemotherapy needed to begin right away.

Camilla shares that she felt a great sadness, as if she was being punished. She lost her breast and her hair. The port placed in her chest for delivering the chemotherapy broke, and five inches of plastic tubing had to be fished out of her heart.

In addition to her own suffering, Camilla had to help her two young sons through this experience.

During her treatments, Camilla experienced frequent insomnia. Her minister suggested she pray the 23rd Psalm, but she couldn't relate the shepherd image to her own experience. One night she decided to substitute the words of the psalm with words that were more meaningful to her. Starting with "The Lord is my treasured friend, I am never alone," Camilla re-wrote the psalm line by line. When she finished, she felt the comfort and security of God's presence as her constant friend.

Camilla appreciated all the people who told her they were praying for her. She said it helped create a "caring circle" around her in her time of need. Their concern meant a lot to her.

Camilla resumed normal activity as soon as possible with a new sense of the gift of life and how much she has to live for. She even says that she no longer resents having cancer. The outpouring of God's love and the spiritual journey the experience prompted are things for which she is grateful. Her experience with cancer

forced her to face her fears, seek forgiveness and re-focus on those things that really matter. Her cancer made her aware of her mortality. She says, “My life is so much more precious to me than it was before.”

Suggestions for Use

Each person’s experience is unique, but there are common feelings experienced by most, if not all, when life brings suffering and loss. This segment can be used to help viewers get in touch with their feelings about the situation in their life that is bringing suffering and loss. It may help them to realize that others share their feelings.

Before viewing, invite those gathered to pay attention to the variety of feelings Camilla experienced. After viewing, ask them to name the feelings they found in the re-created story and interview.

Those Who Suffer: Invite each person to choose one feeling he or she also experiences and share some of their own story.

Those Who Suffer With: Acknowledge that these are not solely the feelings of those who suffer. These are commonly experienced by those who “suffer with” as well. Invite participants to share about their experiences of dealing with their own feelings and those of the one who suffers.

Questions for Sharing

1. What feelings did Camilla have that I also experience?
2. How has viewing this story made me realize my need to be more sensitive to the feelings of others?
3. How well am I juggling my feelings and the feelings of others as we deal with this difficulty in our lives?

4. Am I expressing my feelings in a healthy way? If not, what do I need to do better?
5. Is there someone with whom I feel safe sharing my feelings?
6. Do others feel comfortable sharing their feelings with me? Do I listen with my heart or do I try to talk them out of feeling as they do?

WITNESS SEGMENT

(Begins approximately 15:01 into program.)

Summary

Our witnesses are real people who have walked with their loved ones in times of suffering and the approach of death. Witnesses share that they were on a personal journey parallel to that of the loved one for whom they were caring. Their experiences caring for loved ones brought feelings of impatience, loving concern, anger, fear and self-pity. They report that they learned a lot as well:

- how to be compassionate and sympathetic;
- what it means to suffer and how to suffer with patience and acceptance;
- the depth of their love and commitment;
- the importance of taking care of yourself and accepting help from others;
- the importance of prayer and faith in God's presence and care;
- personal strengths and limitations.

Suggestions for Use

Serving as a caregiver for a loved one who is suffering can be a lonely task. Many do not feel that they can voice or address their own needs when those of the sick person are so much greater and more acute. Caring for one who is suffering is so other-centered that some fail to acknowledge their need to take care of themselves.

Being on the receiving end of care is challenging too. The loss of privacy and autonomy are very difficult for many people to accept. Some may have feelings of guilt for needing so much from others. These feelings, along with those related to their reason for needing care, are a lot to handle.

Those Who Suffer: Share how you feel about being cared for. Consider ways to acknowledge the feelings of your caregiver(s) and encourage them to take care of themselves too.

Those Who Suffer With: Use this segment to invite sharing in a caregivers' support group. Caregivers need to know that they are not alone and not wrong for feeling as they do. In addition to giving them a chance to share their feelings, they might be challenged to commit to doing something to improve their situation and look for things they've gained through the experience of caring for another.

Questions for Sharing

1. Can you identify with any of the witnesses? Which one(s)? How is your experience similar to theirs?
2. What have you learned through your experience of caring for another?
3. What is your biggest challenge?
4. How do you feel when someone is needed to help take care of you?

5. What do you need most from others? Are you able to ask for it?

TEACHING SEGMENT

(Begins approximately 20:00 into program.)

Summary

Patti Normile, an experienced chaplain, author and educator, shares her insights in the *teaching segment*. She explores the questions that the onset of illness and suffering bring. She suggests some creative questions that can lead to deeper understanding and help us integrate our faith in our response to suffering. The following outlines her presentation.

- I. Suffering usually enters life uninvited and unexpected.
 - A. It wounds us physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.
 - B. It inflicts pain and interrupts the routine of daily living.
 - C. It brings confusion and alienation.
 - D. It can snuff out hope.
- II. We have the power to prevail in spite of suffering.
 - A. We may be tempted to ask, “*Why me?*” but come to understand that suffering doesn’t make sense in a logical way.
 - B. We can ask other questions to help us approach our suffering.
 1. *What?* What can I do to help myself make it through today?
 2. *Who?* Who can help me with my needs?
 3. *How?* How can my suffering be a blessed time?

- III. Sometimes personal choices contribute to our suffering.
 - A. We need to review those choices.
 - B. We need to forgive ourselves and acknowledge our need for change.
- IV. Much suffering is unrelated to our personal choices. It is caused by accidents, others' choices, diseases and genetics.
- V. Whatever the cause, we can choose how we cope with suffering.
 - A. Treat suffering and loss with honesty. Tell someone how you really feel.
 - B. Name the emotions that suffering brings. Seek a listener who hears with the heart.
 - C. Tell God how you feel. God already knows, but saying it and praying it releases you from the burden of bearing pain alone.
- VI. God's will for us is salvation—from pain, suffering and death.
 - A. Prayer helps us get acquainted with God.
 - B. Reading Scripture and talking with those who have experienced God's healing presence helps us discover or rediscover God.
- VII. God the Creator is eager to re-create you through your suffering.
 - A. We may find that our experiences of suffering lead us to reach out to others who suffer.
 - B. We can offer our suffering to be joined with Jesus' suffering on the cross.
 - C. If we make something positive of suffering, we won't become bitter or alienated from ourselves, others or God.

D. Suffering and salvation lead to ultimate healing—life eternal.

Suggestions for Use

For Christians, the experience of suffering can be an experience of the Paschal Mystery. It was through suffering and dying that Jesus rose to new life. Our personal suffering and loss can be a doorway to new life for us as well. When we ask the right questions and open our hearts to be transformed by God's love, we may be surprised to find something new and positive coming out of an otherwise unwelcome and unpleasant experience.

While it's important to acknowledge and accept the feelings of those experiencing suffering and loss, it's also important to try to help those stuck in negative emotions to "move on." The feelings of self-pity one feels when one asks, "Why me?" are normal for a time. The suffering person might be empowered with feelings of strength and courage when they begin to ask "Who, What, and How?" questions like those suggested in this segment.

Those Who Suffer: This segment may help you ask some creative and constructive questions about your situation. If viewed with family members present, this may serve as a catalyst for asking and answering these questions in the context of those most closely connected to your experience of suffering and loss.

Those Who Suffer With: This segment may help viewers be of better assistance to the one in their life who is suffering. It may help them suggest the questions that their suffering loved one needs to ask and answer.

Questions for Sharing

1. Which of the questions suggested is most important for me to ask right now?
2. What other questions might I also need to ask?
3. Have my personal choices caused or contributed to my suffering? What can I do about this?
4. Do I have someone with whom I can honestly share my feelings? Do I talk to God in prayer about my feelings?
5. How might God be trying to re-create me through this experience of suffering? How have I already grown?

MUSICAL REFLECTION SEGMENT

(Begins approximately 28:28 into program.)

Summary

The *musical reflection segment* shares the message of the Paschal Mystery. Despite suffering and apparent defeat, hope and life and love can prevail and triumph.

The music for this segment is an instrumental version of the well-known and well-loved hymn, "Amazing Grace." Four vignettes portray how grace, God's amazing and unmerited love, can transform our hearts and our world.

- A child finds a flower growing in an unlikely location and shares it with an elderly person.
- A woman's battle with cancer helps her to find beauty and richness in her life.
- Jesus' suffering and death lead to the glory of the Resurrection and Ascension.
- Scenes from nature assure us of God's hand in the cycle of life and fill us with awe for the beauty and wonder of God's creation.

Suggestions for Use

This segment can be used within a prayer service that concludes a gathering about suffering and loss. It may be used as a reflection or to invite sharing. Some groups may wish to view the segment, reflect on Scripture passages that it brings to mind and share these within the group. As the segment is shown a second time, possibly within a prayer experience, participants may read the Scripture passages as the scenes are viewed. An outline of a sample prayer experience follows.

1. Opening Prayer: (The following or similar words may be used.)

Loving God, we come before you today burdened by pain and sorrow. We are people of faith who trust in your promise to be with us always. We gain hope by reflecting on your Resurrection. We are comforted in knowing that you understand human suffering. Help us to become aware of your presence with us as we gather to pray.

2. Scripture Reading: Psalm 86:1-7
3. Reflection: use video segment
4. Invite sharing of impressions from the vignettes:
What signs of hope did you see?
What images most moved you?
Why do you think the song “Amazing Grace” was chosen to accompany the images?
Has anything positive come out of your suffering?
5. Shared Prayer (petitions)
6. Close by singing the song “Amazing Grace.” You may wish to show the *musical reflection segment* again, this time with the *sound off*, as those gathered sing the song.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

1) Scripture references:

OLD TESTAMENT

Prayers for the Suffering: Psalms 6 (supplication in time of trial); 22 (suffering and hopes of the upright); 23 (the good Shepherd); 30 (thanksgiving after mortal danger); 31 (prayer in time of ordeal); 38 (prayer in distress); 40 (song of praise and prayer for help); 69:1-4 (lament); 70 (a cry of distress); 71 (a prayer in old age); 86 (prayer in time of trial); 102 (prayer in misfortune); 131 (childlike trust); 142 (prayer in persecution). The Book of Job is a story of faithfulness despite suffering.

NEW TESTAMENT

Jesus Heals: Matthew 4:23-25; 8; 9; 12:9-14; 14:34-36; 15:21-31; 17:14-20; 20:29-34; Mark 1:40-45; 2:1-12; 3:1-6; 5; 6:53-56; 7:31-37; 8:22-26; 9:14-29; 10:46-52; Luke 4:31-37, 40-41; 5:17-26; 6:6-11, 17-19; 7:1-17; 8:26-56; 9:37-43; 13:10-17; 14:1-6; 17:11-19; 18:35-43; John 4:46-54; 5; 9; 11:1-44.

Our Healing Ministry: Matthew 25:31-46 (when I was sick, you visited me); Mark 6:7-13 (apostles healing); Mark 16:15-18 (commissioning of apostles); John 13:12-15 (Jesus' model of service); John 20:21 (As the Father has sent me, so I send you); 1 Corinthians 12:9, 28, 30 (healing as a spiritual gift).

On Suffering: Matthew 10:37-39 (take up cross); Romans 8:17 (if we suffer with him, we will be glorified); 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 (power is made perfect in weakness); Colossians 1:24 (rejoice in my sufferings); 2 Timothy 2:11-12 (if we die with

him, we will live with him); 1 Peter 4:13 (share in sufferings of Christ); Hebrews 2:15 (freedom from fear of death).

2) *Catechism of the Catholic Church* references:

The *Catechism* addresses sickness and suffering in its treatment of Anointing of the Sick in 1499-1532.

3) Available from St. Anthony Messenger Press

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<http://Catalog.AmericanCatholic.org> for additional print (magazine, newsletter, book and pamphlet), audio (book and presentation) and video (DVD and VHS) resources to support your efforts in faith formation and personal spiritual growth.

Leader's Guide written by:

Joan McKamey

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CARING WITH FAITH

**SUFFERING
WITH A
LOVED ONE**



LEADER'S GUIDE

PLEASE NOTE: This leader's guide was originally written for those using this video program in its VHS format. Those now using this program on DVD may find some references that do not apply to their use (i.e., directions for locating segments, time notations, etc.). We trust that both VHS- and DVD-users will find this guide a valuable resource.

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CATHOLIC UPDATE VIDEO

The Use of Video in Faith Formation

Jesus used the “media” of his day to teach. He was a master storyteller. His preaching is full of imagery. His parables are calculated to engage his audience. Through the ages, Christian teachers and preachers have followed Jesus in the creative proclamation of his message.

From the culture of Jesus’ time, heavily dependent on *oral* communication—to the advent of *print* communication—to our own time and its dependence on *electronic* media—Christian teachers have adapted their proclamation to each new medium and its particular demands.

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- **Resources for Further Study** are listed at the end of this guide.
- Approximate times are noted for where each segment begins. (*If the VCR is equipped with an “elapsed time” counter, reset the counter to 0:00:00 at the beginning of the tape and fast-forward to the time listed for the beginning of the desired segment. If the VCR does not have an “elapsed time” counter, the facilitator can fast-forward in the “review” mode [i.e., while the VCR is in “play”] to find the gray screen and Catholic Update Video logo that indicate the start of a segment.*)

CARING WITH FAITH **SUFFERING WITH A LOVED ONE**

OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

The “Caring with Faith” programs are a “mini series” within the larger Catholic Update Video series. They are designed for caregivers, support groups, families, pastoral training sessions and healthcare settings. Each video explores the ways Christians enter into the mystery of human suffering.

There is a proverb that says “Trouble shared is trouble halved; joy shared is joy doubled.” Walking the

path of suffering with another is an experience through which we can come to know the truth of this proverb. Jesus knew about both trouble and joy. He knew the importance of sharing life, and all its accompanying troubles and joys, with others.

In recent years numerous books and articles, organizations and support groups have focused attention on the role of caregivers. The resulting “visibility” of the role has helped caregivers recognize that they need affirmation. Emotional and spiritual support for caregivers will also enrich the lives of those receiving care.

This program is about the experience of “suffering with.” It is designed to help caregivers approach their role in a way that is both helpful to their suffering loved one and healthy and meaningful for themselves.

Our *story segment* is entitled “La Vida” (Spanish for “Life”). It is a story of a family’s struggle with their mother’s growing health problems and the woman’s personal struggle with decisions about treatment. It shows not only some of the many challenges caregivers face but also the variety of perspectives and needs that must be considered.

Witnesses who have faced some of these decisions, who know suffering first-hand, share their experiences and insights in the *witness segment*.

Our teacher, Patti Normile, spent a lot of time with the suffering and their loved ones while serving as a hospital chaplain. She shares some of the insights gained from her experiences in the *teaching segment*.

We close our program with a *musical reflection segment*, an instrumental version of the song “Be Thou My Vision” with scenes depicting an adult daughter caring for her mother.

Audience

This program is intended for an adult audience. It may include:

- those who are walking with another whose journey includes suffering: caregivers, healthcare workers, family members and pastoral care visitors.
- those who are facing their own suffering as the result of illness or injury. It may be viewed by individuals (home, healthcare facility) or in group settings (parish, healthcare facility, family).

Teenage viewers in appropriate settings may also benefit from viewing some of the segments with a teacher or youth minister.

Story Segment

(Begins approximately 3:48 into program.)

Summary: La Vida

This story contains dialogue in both English and Spanish. English subtitles are used when Spanish is spoken.

As our story opens, we see a little girl playing in a grassy area. We hear her father explaining that the family named her Clarita after her grandmother, Clara, and that she is turning out to be a lot like her.

Our story continues with a flashback. Grandmother Clara is sick in bed. She has learned that she needs dialysis but isn't sure that she wants the treatment. During a pastoral care visit from Sister Lu, a member of the parish staff, she tells Sister Lu that she feels like a burden. She has concerns about going forward with dialysis—she is afraid, worn out, doesn't want to leave home, and is worried about the cost. It would be easy for her to just let go and die, but she is concerned that it

wouldn't be the right thing to do.

Sister Lu assures Clara that there is no sin in refusing this treatment. Either way God will take care of her. Clara says that her husband would have known what to do. She asks Sister Lu for a box from the dresser. From the box, Clara takes out her husband's pocket watch and asks to be left to rest.

Downstairs in the kitchen, Clara's adult children and a teenage grandson are sharing some of their own caregiving concerns—transportation to the clinic, where their mother should live and the cost of treatment, to name a few. There is a mixture of emotional responses as well as fact-sharing. Sister Lu listens to their conversation and then shares with them that Clara isn't sure she wants to go through with the treatments. Clara is tired and discouraged, Sister says, and doesn't want to be a burden. She fears she might not be able to enjoy life, even with the treatments, and misses their father.

Mention of their father leads the family to recall how he often held his old pocket watch as he made decisions—as if it helped him think of the right thing to do. He stopped winding it, one of the sons remembers, the day before he died.

Connie, a daughter-in-law who is pregnant, announces that her labor pains have begun; she needs to get to the hospital. She suggests to her husband that they let Clara know that the baby is coming. Connie's husband, Ricardo, goes up to tell Clara that their baby would like to get to know her grandmother; they would like to have that chance a while longer too. Clara hands Ricardo the pocket watch and asks him to wind it. She says that her husband would have said that we still need each other here and that she should stay around and be waited on.

As the story concludes, we see Clarita playing again,

in the present. This time the setting is clear: She and her father are in a cemetery. Ricardo indicates that his mother died one month ago after several good years. The experience made the family stronger because they learned to depend on one another more. He closes by saying that his father would have said, “We still need each other.”

Suggestions for Use

This story explores some of the many family dynamics that may occur when one of its members is suffering. When viewed by family caregivers, this segment may help them to talk about their own experiences, concerns and feelings. A facilitator might help them better understand the many viewpoints and needs different members of the family may have. Those who work with families in caregiving settings may use this story for formation or enrichment.

Some viewers may need further explanation concerning Sister Lu’s comments about Clara’s option to reject treatment. While we do not know the full extent of Clara’s illness, it is clear that she is questioning whether the benefits of treatment are worth the burdens dialysis would place on her and her family. The following summary of Catholic Church teaching on this matter may be helpful to viewers.

The Catholic Church strongly believes in the sanctity of life and the preservation of life at all stages from conception to death. But one is not obliged to make use of all possible medical treatments in order to preserve life. A person has the right to refuse *extraordinary* or *disproportionate* medical treatment and is allowed to die peacefully with human Christian dignity.

The Church teaches that one is morally obliged to

use only *ethically ordinary* means to preserve life. Such means do not involve serious burden such as severe pain, excessive cost, severely disabling effects and risks. Such means also must be genuinely beneficial. Their benefit must be proportionate to any burden they cause.

No one is morally obliged to use *ethically extraordinary* means to preserve life. These are disproportionately burdensome and are useless or become so in the course of treatment. The refusal of ethically extraordinary means is not equivalent to suicide.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states: “Discontinuing medical procedures that are burdensome, dangerous, extraordinary, or disproportionate to the expected outcome can be legitimate; it is refusal of ‘over-zealous’ treatment. Here one does not will to cause death; one’s inability to impede it is merely accepted” (*Catechism* 2278).

Questions for Sharing

1. Why do you think the story is called “La Vida/Life”?
What does it teach us about the cycle of life and death?
2. What was your reaction to Sister Lu telling Clara that there would be no sin in refusing treatment?
What do you understand of the Church’s teaching?
3. With which of the children do you most easily identify? Why?
4. This family was drawn closer as a result of Clara’s illness. Because of her dependence on them, they have grown to depend on each other more as well. What effects, positive and negative, is the suffering of your loved one having on your family and friends?

Witness Segment

(Begins approximately 17:27 into program.)

Summary

Several real-life Catholics who receive assistance from caregivers share about the experience of needing and receiving care. Some of the insights they share are:

- physical limitations and dependence can be very frustrating;
- the adjustment from being active and independent to being dependent on another is very difficult;
- it's an adjustment to have to ask for help and accept that there are things you can no longer do yourself;
- sometimes one can feel claustrophobic, wanting to get out of the house but unable to do so without assistance;
- it's important to keep as much independence as possible, but assistance when needed is appreciated;
- being touched and held by a loved one can be healing;
- it's important to recognize that caregivers need respite since they too are often confined to home;
- to be told you are loved is a wonderful and therapeutic gift;
- the relationship between those who receive and those who give care can be meaningful to both.

Suggestions for Use

This segment may be especially useful with three different groups of people:

- The first group is family caregivers and friends whose loved ones are suffering. Their desire to be of help may sometimes come into conflict with their own issues and needs. Hearing the testimony of others who are suffering, people with whom they have no close personal ties, may help them gain perspective on their loved one's situation and feelings. It may help them initiate meaningful conversations with their loved one concerning their needs and feelings.
- The second group is those who receive care. Many who cope with suffering often feel very alone, even when family and friends rally around. While the witnesses portrayed here speak from *specific* experiences of suffering, there are common points of identification that may help suffering viewers feel less alone. The segment could be viewed by individuals or within a support group. It may be helpful in allowing group members to open up and share their own experiences.
- The third group is volunteers and professionals in parish settings or other caregiving situations, who assist the suffering and their loved ones. It may be used in pastoral training sessions to increase one's sensitivity to those who suffer.

Questions for Sharing

1. What is your own experience of suffering? What feelings do you associate with suffering?
2. What do you need from others when you are suffering?
3. What is your experience of suffering with another? What feelings does this evoke?
4. Which witness shared something that related well to your own experience? What did they say? How does

it relate?

5. Which witness shared something that challenged you? What did they say? Why does it challenge you?

Teaching Segment

(Begins approximately 21:35 into program.)

Summary

Patti Normile, teacher for this segment, has shared in the suffering of many in her role as hospital chaplain. She has also written on the role of caregiver, highlighting its spiritual dimension. Patti's experience has taught her that light can shine in the darkness of doubt or pain. While hope may be elusive as we watch a loved one in pain, we can take steps to discover meaning in the experience. She suggests the following steps:

I. Listen

- A. Listening without judging gives our loved one permission to share his feelings.
- B. Empathetic listening assures her that she is not alone in her suffering and will not be abandoned.

II. Learn

- A. Learn about symptoms, reactions and treatments.
- B. Learn about care options.
- C. Learn what your loved one needs.
- D. Learn your own limits.
- E. Learn to "suffer with" your loved one.
 - 1. Give others permission to express their pain.
 - 2. Make a friend of change.
 - 3. Learn when *not* to do for the patient.
 - 4. Learn about yourself, your family and friends, the suffering loved one, your God.

III. Love and laugh!

- A. Love unconditionally.

1. Seek the good in the situation.
 2. Seek God.
 3. Forgive and seek forgiveness.
- B. Laughter has healing power to release tension and stress.

IV. Let go and let God.

- A. Let go by letting God be God.
- B. Let go by asking for and accepting help from others.
- C. Let go by sharing feelings with God.
 1. Invite God in by surrendering your patient to God.
 2. Praise God in all things, even through present circumstances.

Suggestions for Use

Caregivers viewing this segment individually or within a support group will benefit from the suggestions offered here. Before viewing, the group facilitator might suggest that each person listen for steps upon which they are stumbling or which they have not yet taken. After viewing, invite participants to jot down what step they need to take, name the obstacles to taking that step and develop a plan for taking it.

Sharing this within the group will help caregivers in at least three significant ways: 1) they will realize that they are not the only ones struggling in the caregiver role; 2) they may gain useful ideas from others and 3) they will feel more committed to their plan and be more likely to carry it out. The following questions may also help with the sharing.

Questions for Sharing

1. Which step do you need to take in order to become a better caregiver?

2. What obstacles make taking this step difficult for you?
3. What will you do to make sure that you take this step?
4. What is your greatest personal challenge in being a caregiver?
5. What meaning do you derive from being a caregiver for a loved one? What positive things have come out of this experience?
6. Why is it so hard to find balance when caring for another? Do you think it's possible? Why or why not?

Musical Reflection Segment

(Begins approximately 30:00 into program.)

Summary

Set against the instrumental version of the hymn "Be Thou My Vision," this segment contains scenes depicting an adult daughter caring for her mother. In the different situations shown, we see the daughter helping her mother while also attempting to meet her own needs.

Suggestions for Use

This segment can be used within a prayer service that concludes a gathering of those who share in the suffering of a loved one. It may be used as a reflection or to invite sharing. An outline of a sample prayer experience follows.

1. Opening Prayer: (The following or similar words may be used.) *Loving God, we come before you today with heavy hearts. We are burdened by the suffering of our loved ones and struggle with the*

challenge of meeting their care needs as well as our own. We know that you will not abandon anyone who cries out to you. Guide our hands as we care for our loved ones. Give us strength to make decisions that take their needs as well as our own into consideration. Help us to become aware of your presence with us always and especially now as we gather to pray.

2. Scripture Reading: Matthew 25: 34-41
3. Invite reflection and sharing on the questions: When do I recognize the Lord in my suffering loved one? When do I recognize the Lord in me?
4. View the video segment.
5. Shared Prayer (petitions)
6. Conclude by praying the Our Father.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

1) Scripture references:

OLD TESTAMENT

Prayers for the Suffering: Psalms 6 (supplication in time of trial); 22 (suffering and hopes of the upright); 23 (the good Shepherd); 30 (thanksgiving after mortal danger); 31 (prayer in time of ordeal); 38 (prayer in distress); 40 (song of praise and prayer for help); 69:1-4 (lament); 70 (a cry of distress); 71 (a prayer in old age); 86 (prayer in time of trial); 102 (prayer in misfortune); 131 (childlike trust); 142 (prayer in persecution). The Book of Job is a story of faithfulness despite suffering. Isaiah 40 focuses on the promise of salvation.

NEW TESTAMENT

Jesus Heals: Matthew 4:23-25; 8; 9; 12:9-14; 14:34-36; 15:21-31; 17:14-20; 20:29-34; Mark 1:40-45;

2:1-12; 3:1-6; 5; 6:53-56; 7:31-37; 8:22-26; 9:14-29; 10:46-52; Luke 4:31-37, 40-41; 5:17-26; 6:6-11, 17-19; 7:1-17; 8:26-56; 9:37-43; 13:10-17; 14:1-6; 17:11-19; 18:35-43; John 4:46-54; 5; 9; 11:1-44.

Our Healing Ministry: Matthew 25:31-46; Mark 6:7-13; 16:15-18; John 13:12-15; 20:21; 1 Corinthians 12:9; 12:28, 30.

On Suffering, Death and Resurrection: Matthew 10:37-39; Mark 14:33-34; Luke 23:46; 7:11-17; 24:39; John 5:24-25; 6:39-54; 11; Romans 5:12; 6:3-11; 8:17; 1 Corinthians 15; 2 Corinthians 4:12-14; 12:7-10; Philippians 1:21-23; 3:20-21; Colossians 1:24; 2:12; 3:1-4; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 2 Timothy 2:11-12; 1 Peter 4:13; Hebrews 2:15; 5:7-9; 9:27-28.

2) *Catechism of the Catholic Church* references:

The *Catechism* addresses sickness and suffering in its treatment of Anointing of the Sick in 1499-1532. The experience of suffering is addressed in 164. Palliative care is covered in 2279.

3) Available from St. Anthony Messenger Press

PLEASE SEE OUR CATALOG AT

<http://Catalog.AmericanCatholic.org> for additional print (magazine, newsletter, book and pamphlet), audio (book and presentation) and video (DVD and VHS) resources to support your efforts in faith formation and personal spiritual growth.

Leader's Guide written by:
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CARING WITH FAITH

**TOWARD
DEATH
WITH HOPE**



LEADER'S GUIDE

PLEASE NOTE: This leader's guide was originally written for those using this video program in its VHS format. Those now using this program on DVD may find some references that do not apply to their use (i.e., directions for locating segments, time notations, etc.). We trust that both VHS- and DVD-users will find this guide a valuable resource.

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CATHOLIC UPDATE VIDEO

The Use of Video in Faith Formation

Jesus used the “media” of his day to teach. He was a master storyteller. His preaching is full of imagery. His parables are calculated to engage his audience. Through the ages, Christian teachers and preachers have followed Jesus in the creative proclamation of his message.

From the culture of Jesus’ time, heavily dependent on *oral* communication—to the advent of *print* communication—to our own time and its dependence on *electronic* media—Christian teachers have adapted their proclamation to each new medium and its particular demands.

Media scholars like Marshall McLuhan remind us of the impact of the medium on the message it carries. *How* we communicate affects *what* we communicate. Electronic media offer us new ways to tell the story of our faith. Father Pierre Babin points out (see *The New Era in Religious Communications*, Pierre Babin with Mercedes Iannone, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1991) that the message, as well as the sender and receiver, all will be re-shaped in the telling.

Catechesis, as a part of the total evangelization process, must touch the learners’ hearts and shine the light of faith on their lives. It must connect to the learners’ experience or risk being discarded as irrelevant. To be effective, catechists must learn how to make the best use of the electronic media available in our culture, aware of the particular medium’s strengths and weaknesses.

Video is a very popular, familiar and accessible part of our electronic culture. It draws us in, captures our imaginations and touches us on a deep, emotional level.

As it speaks to our experience and utilizes several of our senses, its message is more likely to be heard and remembered. By integrating quality video programs into the catechetical process, catechists can share the message more effectively.

At the same time, as television becomes a more pervasive part of our lives, we can be lulled into thinking that it can do everything for us—inform, entertain, shop, even worship. The reality is that it can't and shouldn't do everything. As Pierre Babin emphasizes, electronic media function differently than print media. They appeal first to the emotional content of our faith rather than the intellectual content. Video cannot begin to convey the amount of information print can. It cannot replace the live presence and personal witness of the catechist. But in a catechetical setting, it can be a powerful part of the “mix of media” used in proclaiming the message.

How effectively video—or any electronic media—is used in the catechetical setting depends primarily on how prepared the catechist is to use it:

- A preview of the video is essential to determine the best use of the program with a particular group.
- The catechist should select a video program (or section of a video) based on the audience, the purpose, and the availability of competent teachers and other resources and activities to support the theme.
- Sufficient time should be available to introduce the video and to process the experience.

Catechists must realize that they control the use of video in their sessions. They might approach a video program in one of two ways: as a skeleton on which to build a presentation or as a way to “enflesh” an existing skeleton.

A video program well-tailored to the needs of a

group might be used in its entirety. At other times, catechists may creatively manipulate the video to fit their needs:

- An excerpt may be taken from a longer piece to illustrate a point.
- A video may be shown with the *sound off* to highlight an aspect of the program.
- The “pause” button can be used freely to interject explanations and examples or to elicit reactions.
- The program or excerpt may be repeated to emphasize a point.

The producers of this video program have attempted to craft both medium and message with an awareness of the power of the medium as well as its limitations. They encourage those who use it to study this guide and become familiar with ways to allow this program to supplement their own sharing of the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.

Introduction to the Series

Catholic Update Video is a video resource designed for use in the RCIA, catechist formation, sacrament programs for parents, faith-sharing groups, study groups, ministry training and high school religious education. *Catholic Update Video* draws from Catholic life and practice to present a single topic in a “video toolbox” format with four distinct segments—story, witness, teaching and musical reflection.

Catholic Update Video has been designed with today’s learner in mind. Its segments are short and can stand alone or be used with others in the program. The format is flexible, making it useful in a variety of group settings as well as for individual viewing. The emphasis is on what video can do best, namely touch us through story (*story segment*), testimony (*witness segment*) and

song (*musical reflection segment*) with images and the emotions they carry. But a more “didactic” approach (*teaching segment*) respects the need to convey a concise core of information.

The general model for catechetical process (life experience, message or doctrine, response) is respected by the order of the four segments, although at times a catechist may choose to use them alone or out of sequence:

- Each program begins with a **story segment** designed to draw viewers in and help them connect their life experience to the faith topic.
- The testimony of real-life Catholics in the **witness segment** helps viewers reflect on their own life experience and prepare for group sharing.
- Our teacher briefly highlights some aspects of the topic in the **teaching segment**. Relevant images help to illustrate the points being made. (*This segment is not intended to treat a topic exhaustively nor substitute for a more thorough presentation on the message or doctrine.*)
- Viewers are invited to respond in prayer using the **musical reflection segment**.

The program’s host provides a context for each segment. This is designed to help viewers who will see the program from beginning to end. Catechists who use segments individually or out of sequence should prepare their own lead-in. On-screen graphics provide viewers with a question for reflection or sharing between segments.

This leader’s guide is an important tool for making the best use of this video program.

It includes the following features:

- **Summary and Suggestions for Use** for each segment.

- **Questions for Sharing** for the *story, witness* and *teaching segments*; facilitators can choose from them or use them as models for developing their own questions.
- **Suggestions for Use** for the *musical reflection segment* provide suggestions for using this segment in a prayer setting.
- **Resources for Further Study** are listed at the end of this guide.
- Approximate times are noted for where each segment begins. (*If the VCR is equipped with an “elapsed time” counter, reset the counter to 0:00:00 at the beginning of the tape and fast-forward to the time listed for the beginning of the desired segment. If the VCR does not have an “elapsed time” counter, the facilitator can fast-forward in the “review” mode [i.e., while the VCR is in “play”] to find the gray screen and Catholic Update Video logo that indicate the start of a segment.*)

CARING WITH FAITH **TOWARD DEATH WITH HOPE**

OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

The “Caring with Faith” programs are a “mini series” within the larger Catholic Update Video series. They are designed for caregivers, support groups, families, pastoral training sessions and healthcare settings. Each video explores the ways Christians enter into the mystery of human suffering.

Dying is a natural part of the life cycle, yet it is often an object of fear both on the part of the one who is dying and those who love the dying person. While many people will freely talk about any number of very personal matters, death is a taboo subject, one to be avoided. This leaves us ill-equipped for dealing with it openly when our own death or the death of a loved one approaches.

Why do so many fear death? For one, we live in a culture largely removed from the cycle of life and death. Our early experiences of death may be limited to the death of a pet, while many of our ancestors, especially those in rural farming communities, had more opportunities to see death as a natural part of life. Our culture has been called “death denying.” The achievements of science, especially medicine, have given us a sense (however true or false) of power over death, or at least the ability to postpone it. We prize youth and health; the images that fill advertising and popular media do not dwell on sickness or death.

We also live in an age where incredible amounts of information are available to us with a few strokes on the keyboard. Death remains an unknown experience in a culture that wants to know it all. Death also ultimately means loss—the loss of relationships first

and foremost. It is difficult to embrace an event that will bring separation from our loved ones.

Christians believe that death is the doorway to eternal life with God. Building a bridge from this belief to our personal feelings in the face of death is our task. Embracing death as a natural part of our *life* journey as well as our *faith* journey can bring beauty and hope to an experience many see only as bleak and painful.

In this video program, we offer a Christian view of death and the dying process. In our *story segment* we spend a day with a hospice nurse, traveling with her on her visits to the dying and talking with her about her experiences.

In the *witness segment*, Father Silas Oleksinski, O.F.M., offers his personal thoughts and insights on the topics of suffering, death and dying, and visitors. He was interviewed just weeks before his death from cancer.

Our teacher, Patti Normile, spent a lot of time with the dying and their loved ones while serving as a hospital chaplain. She shares some of the insights gained from her experiences in the *teaching segment*.

We close our program with a *musical reflection segment*. Dancer Betsey Beckman adds interpretive movement to the David Haas song, "The Story of God." This is a song of God's victory over death.

Audience

This program is intended for an adult or teenage audience. It may include

- those who are facing their own death as the result of illness or injury. It may be viewed by individuals (home, healthcare facility) or in group settings (parish, healthcare facility, family).
- those who are walking with another on their

journey to death: caregivers, healthcare workers, family members and pastoral care visitors.

- those who are working through their grief after the death of a loved one.

Story Segment

(Begins approximately 04:00 into program.)

Summary

Cheri King, a hospice nurse, allows us to take a peek into her work with dying patients. We accompany her on her visits to three patients—Mae, Rose and Virgil. She shares some of the insights she’s gained through working closely with the dying.

The first visit is with Mae, a woman with lung cancer. In addition to checking Mae’s breathing, Cheri talks with her about the availability of an aide to help with bathing. Cheri mentions that there are special books available to help Mae’s young grandchildren understand and deal with her illness and death. Mae shares her concern about how her husband is coping. Cheri listens with caring and then offers the observation and encouragement that “Everybody comes to terms with things in their own way.”

Cheri reflects that part of her role is to talk openly with patients about their death and dying. She observes that often patients don’t have anyone to share their feelings with or get straight answers from.

The next visit is with Rose, a woman who has pancreatic cancer. Cheri remarks that Rose is a real inspiration to her—a woman of faith and optimism. Part of the visit involves a discussion about medicine dosage. She jokes about Rose’s husband’s cooking and asks Rose about her level of involvement in household chores.

Cheri reflects that the dying phase of life is an important one. She says she tries to help her patients see it as a natural part of life that can be both positive and meaningful.

The final visit is with Virgil, a man with end-stage heart disease. Virgil complains of being worn out and having chest pain. Cheri checks his breathing, asks about his use of an inhaler, and tells him to wear his oxygen that day. Virgil's sense of humor is apparent as he jokes with Cheri and blames his chest pains on his excitement about her visit.

Cheri reflects that her patients gift her by allowing her to see the benefits of their positive lives. She enjoys seeing family members expressing their love for the dying patient. She says she gets back more than she gives.

Suggestions for Use

This segment offers a window into the lives of three dying patients and the insights of a woman who has made the care of the dying her life's work. It may be used to help dying and grieving persons share the feelings generated by their own experience.

While Cheri does not explicitly talk about issues of religion or spirituality, she alludes to it in a reference to a pastoral visit by a chaplain. She is aware of the power of faith as reflected in the lives of her patients. Those using this segment may wish to develop the role of faith as appropriate to their situation, supplemented by material in the other segments of this video.

For the grieving

The segment may be viewed by groups of those who have lost or are losing a loved one to death. Watching this may help them to articulate some of their concerns

and fears for their loved one and for themselves. The following or similar questions may help in this sharing.

For the dying

This segment, viewed alone or with a group of others who are dying, may help one who is dying to get in touch with what this process means personally. Journaling about the experience and/or sharing this with others may aid the growth process—the eventual acceptance of the fact that one is dying—and the ability to share this experience with loved ones. The following or similar questions may be helpful for journaling and sharing.

Questions for Sharing

For the grieving

1. Cheri says that many people avoid talking honestly about death. How comfortable are you with this topic? What do you need to say that you haven't expressed yet?
2. What are your feelings looking into the lives of other dying patients when you have a loved one who is dying/has recently died?
3. What insights did you gain from the patients visited?
4. What insights did you gain from the hospice nurse—either in her interaction with her patients or in her comments on dying?
5. How does your faith affect the process of grieving in your life?

For the dying

1. What did you think of Cheri, the hospice nurse, and

the things she said about dying? What was especially meaningful for you?

2. Mae expressed concern about how her husband was handling things. Who in your life do you have similar concern about?
3. Virgil used humor to lighten the mood without denying the reality of his situation. When has humor been a useful tool for you or your family/friends?
4. Rose's faith and optimism help her to approach her living and dying with a positive attitude. How is your faith helping you live and die with grace?

Witness Segment

(Begins approximately 15:00 into program.)

Summary

Our witness is Franciscan friar, Silas Oleksinski. Shortly before his death from cancer in the fall of 1995, he granted the producers the awesome opportunity to record some of his insights into the dying process—enhanced by his personal perspective as a dying person.

Father Silas was born in Conover, Wisconsin, on October 21, 1923. He was received into the Franciscan Order in 1948, made his solemn profession in 1952 and was ordained a priest in 1957. His years of ministry include parish work, retreat center directorships, college treasurer, orphanage chaplain and missionary work among other things. He worked toward racial integration in New Orleans in the early 1960's. He participated actively in efforts to help the poor in Louisville, KY, in the mid-1960's. At an age when many are already retired, Father Silas began a new ministry. He offered his services for the evangelization of the Commonwealth of Independent States (former

Soviet Union). This ministry was interrupted by the discovery of cancer in 1994.

Despite his illness, he requested assignment to a parish in New Orleans. There it was discovered that his cancer was spreading. He returned to Cincinnati in late July 1995 and died on September 28th. Excerpts from an interview conducted in his final weeks make up this *witness segment*.

Father Silas, following the model of his order's founder, St. Francis of Assisi, viewed aspects of life as "brother" and "sister." He speaks of his cancer as his dancing partner and shares some of his thoughts about suffering, dying and visitors.

ON SUFFERING..

- suffering is part of the reality of life
- without suffering I lose a dimension of my life
- one of our greatest gifts is that we can identify with the suffering of Jesus

ON DYING and DEATH...

- death is the culmination of the whole birthing and dying process
- dying is an integral part of my life
- this is the gift that God gives us: to just take one more step today and the next tomorrow
- not knowing what comes next or whether I can take the next step is emptiness in the sense that I depend upon Jesus for that energy to say, "Jesus is Lord"
- this moment is Jesus' gift to me now
- while the past may be over, I will be living with God forever
- this is the process of healing as well as the process of dying

ON VISITORS...

- make it an opportunity for pleasantness
- always be aware that the patient is the one that needs the comfort
- it's a blessing not to have to talk but to be present—it's just good to be together
- take this moment and celebrate it

Suggestions for Use

This segment offers a unique view of the thoughts and experiences of one dying person. While Father Silas' experience is clearly his own, he gives us a window into the world of all those who are dying. Emotional attachment and personal grief may prevent this kind of conversation from happening with dying loved ones. Those who are dying may draw comfort from this fellow traveler who has a hopeful and faith-filled, yet practical, view of the dying process.

For the grieving

The segment may be viewed by groups of those who have lost or are losing a loved one to death. Watching this may help them to articulate some of their concerns and fears for their loved one and for themselves. The following or similar questions may help in this sharing.

For the dying

This segment, viewed alone or with a group of others who are dying, may help one get in touch with what this dying process means to him personally. Journaling about the experience and/or sharing this with others may serve as an aid in the healing process, the eventual acceptance of the fact that one is dying, and the ability to share this experience with loved ones. The following

or similar questions may be helpful for journaling and sharing.

Questions for Sharing

For the grieving

1. What is the hardest part of seeing your loved one suffer?
2. Have you experienced anything positive happening in your relationship as a result of this situation?
3. What are your feelings about your own death? How are these affecting your grieving process?
4. Father Silas' faith gives his view of dying a hopeful light. How does your faith affect your view of death and dying?
5. What kind of visitor are you? What new insights did you gain from hearing Father Silas' remarks?

For the dying

1. What is your reaction to Father Silas calling his cancer his "dancing partner"? What would it take for you to view your own illness or injury in this way?
2. What is your experience of suffering? How does it add to/subtract from your life?
3. What is your own view of dying? your personal death?
4. Father Silas' faith gives his view of dying a hopeful light. How does your faith affect your view of death and dying?
5. What would you like to say to your visitors?

Teaching Segment

(Begins approximately 20:00 into program.)

Summary

Patti Normile, an experienced chaplain, author and educator, shares her insights in the *teaching segment*. She explores dying in relation to life and suggests that death may be the ultimate healing.

Patti begins by relating a story told by the late Jesuit writer and teacher Anthony de Mello of a wise one who knew how to create love and harmony. He advised viewing life from the perspective, “I am dying and this...person too is dying.” These words help us to move beyond the denial of our mortality and invite us to experience real relationships with others and with life (*One Minute Wisdom* by Anthony de Mello, Doubleday, 1986).

Patti says, “Dying is something we do while we live; living is what we do while we are dying.” We all experience death constantly and in a variety of ways—opportunities, the cells in our bodies, relationships, pets, friends and family die.

Each death takes a bit of us with it but also has the potential to create new life. Since we all will die a bodily death, the challenge is to live fully until we die and to enable others to do so.

Even though death is a natural experience, it is often feared because it is unknown. It separates us from what we know. It may fill one with fear of abandonment.

Elisabeth Kubler-Ross taught about the stages of grief experienced by the dying. People generally go through the following stages: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance (*On Death and Dying*, MacMillan, 1969). Patient, friends and family may all experience these stages but not simultaneously.

Allowing and accepting one's own feelings as well as those of others is important. Sharing perceptions and expectations of death brings fears to light.

When a cure is not possible, healing of a person is still possible. We can help calm the patient's fear of abandonment with the message, "God knows, accepts and loves you." Healing can bring reconciliation with others and God as well as hope for the future.

Lengthy illness and aging allow loved ones to journey through the stages of grief before death comes. Sudden death robs them of this opportunity. In the case of sudden death, the stages of grieving must follow rather than precede death. Death has to be faced without preparation.

Death raises questions that can challenge the faith of the most religious. Spiritual healing can link patients, families and friends to the life of Christ, his resurrection and salvation. Journeying through the grieving process may reaffirm faith. One may find that healing and death are not opposites; death may be the ultimate healing.

Suggestions for Use

Patti invites us to look at death as a natural, necessary and even positive life event. She says it may be the "ultimate healing." Those who are grieving—and this may include the dying and their loved ones as well as the loved ones of those who have already died—may find both comfort and challenge in her words. Comfort often comes when we realize we are not alone, not crazy for feeling as we do. The challenge may be in "putting a new frame" around our experience, seeing that there may be something positive to be gained from this very painful situation.

Many people have difficulty talking honestly about death. This segment may be viewed in a group—within

a grieving family or in groups of those who are going through similar experiences (dying, preparing for the death of a loved one, grieving the loss of a loved one)—or individually. The segment may facilitate more open and honest sharing on this difficult and painful topic. The questions that follow invite discussion and sharing in groups. Individuals may be invited to use them for their own reflection and/or journaling.

Questions for Sharing

For the grieving

1. Knowing what you do of the pain of losing a loved one, would you rather your own death be sudden or following a lengthy illness? Why?
2. How has your faith been challenged by the impending or recent death of your loved one? How has your faith been reaffirmed?
3. What healing do you need at this time?
4. What do you fear about death?
5. We are all moving closer to our own deaths. What has your experience of losing a loved one to death taught you about your own life? How can you live more fully until you too die?

For the dying

1. Which of Kubler-Ross' stages of grief do you find yourself in? Is it helpful to know that others go through similar stages? What will it take for you to reach the stage of acceptance?
2. How has your faith been challenged by your experience of dying? How has your faith been reaffirmed by this same experience?

3. Patti says that healing and death aren't opposites. Even though you haven't been physically cured, what healing have you experienced? What healing do you need at this time?
4. What do you fear about dying?
5. What do you think Patti means when she says that death may be the "ultimate healing"? How does this fit your own experience?

Musical Reflection Segment

(Begins approximately 28:00 into program.)

Summary

Dancer Betsey Beckman adds interpretive movement to the David Haas song, "The Story of God." This is a song of God's victory over death. It is set to a Gaelic melody with scriptural basis in 1 Corinthians 15:54b-55, Hosea 13:14, Genesis 1-2 and Revelation 21:5-6. As the words of the song move from images of death and grief to God's salvation, the emotions of mourning give way to the feelings of joy. We believe that death is not the end for us, yet our joy in the Resurrection is only possible through the death of Good Friday. As Christians, we know that both death and life, grief and joy, are our story and God's story.

Suggestions for Use

This segment can be used within a prayer service that concludes a gathering of those dealing with the reality of dying and death. It may be used as a reflection or to invite sharing. An outline of a sample prayer experience follows.

1. Opening Prayer: (The following or similar words

may be used.) *Loving God, we come before you today realizing our great need for you in the face of our powerlessness over death. We acknowledge that you have conquered death and we rejoice in this fact. We ask your blessing on us as we struggle to accept the loss and death in our lives. We believe that you share our pain. Help us to become aware of your presence with us as we gather to pray.*

2. Scripture Reading: Psalm 86:1-7
3. Reflection: Ask the group to reflect on the feelings they experience in the face of death.
4. Invite sharing of feelings.
5. Shared Prayer (petitions)
6. Close by viewing the *musical reflection segment*.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

1) Scripture references:

OLD TESTAMENT

Prayers for the Suffering: Psalms 6 (supplication in time of trial); 22 (suffering and hopes of the upright); 23 (the good Shepherd); 30 (thanksgiving after mortal danger); 31 (prayer in time of ordeal); 38 (prayer in distress); 40 (song of praise and prayer for help); 69:1-4 (lament); 70 (a cry of distress); 71 (a prayer in old age); 86 (prayer in time of trial); 102 (prayer in misfortune); 131 (childlike trust); 142 (prayer in persecution). The Book of Job is a story of faithfulness despite suffering. Isaiah 40 focuses on the promise of salvation.

NEW TESTAMENT

Jesus Heals

Matthew 4:23-25; 8; 9; 12:9-14; 14:34-36; 15:21-31; 17:14-20; 20:29-34; Mark 1:40-45; 2:1-12; 3:1-6; 5;

6:53-56; 7:31-37; 8:22-26; 9:14-29; 10:46-52; Luke 4:31-37, 40-41; 5:17-26; 6:6-11, 17-19; 7:1-17; 8:26-56; 9:37-43; 13:10-17; 14:1-6; 17:11-19; 18:35-43; John 4:46-54; 5; 9; 11:1-44.

Our Healing Ministry

Matthew 25:31-46; Mark 6:7-13; 16:15-18; John 13:12-15; 20:21; 1 Corinthians 12:9; 12:28, 30.

On Suffering, Death and Resurrection

Matthew 10:37-39; Mark 14:33-34; Luke 23:46; 7:11-17; 24:39; John 5:24-25; 6:39-54; 11; Romans 5:12; 6:3-11; 8:17; 1 Corinthians 15; 2 Corinthians 4:12-14; 12:7-10; Philippians 1:21-23; 3:20-21; Colossians 1:24; 2:12; 3:1-4; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 2 Timothy 2:11-12; 1 Peter 4:13; Hebrews 2:15; 5:7-9; 9:27-28.

2) *Catechism of the Catholic Church* references:

The *Catechism* addresses sickness and suffering in its treatment of Anointing of the Sick in 1499-1532. References to the Christian view of death and resurrection can be found under “I Believe in the Resurrection of the Body” (988-1019), “I Believe in Life Everlasting” (1020-1060), “Christian Funerals” (1680-1690) and “Respect for the Dead” (2299-2301).

3) Available from St. Anthony Messenger Press

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