

Ultimate health and wellbeing come through the sacraments because ultimate health and wellbeing came to us through Jesus Christ, who is truly health and wellbeing personified.

As an incarnational religion, Catholic Christianity brings about health and wellbeing through the sacraments that continue the saving work of Jesus Christ throughout history.

Good religion provides sacramental health and wellbeing in conjunction with good medicine and good psychology. But only good religion takes care of us eternally beyond this life.

If were not for Original Sin, we would really have no need of medicine and psychology, for we were in Paradise. In Eden, religion was our healthy relationship with our Creator.

But because of Original Sin, we need not only medicine and psychology, but also religion to bring us complete health and wellbeing both now in this life, and then for all eternity.

Good religion is more than faith healing or emotional release. Catholic Christianity claims Jesus Christ as our special Divine Physician and the Eucharist as our Medicine of Immortality.

Through the sacraments, a healthy and wholesome union with God is restored and further developed by the intent, design, and the command of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

In particular, the three sacraments of Penance, Eucharist, and Anointing are part of our eternal health and healing plan, based on the transformation established by our Baptism.

Healing and health may begin in this life, but they can only be completed in the next life, which includes the ultimate of all cures, our bodily resurrection from the dead. Together let us support each other in reaching lasting health and happiness.

HEALTH AND HEALING FOR CATHOLIC CHRISTIANS

For good health, we need three things: good medicine, good psychology, and good religion. All three work together for our health and wellbeing as individuals within community.

- Medicine is qualified as good when it promotes optimal physical health without quackery.
- Psychology is qualified as good when it promotes optimal mental health without ideology.
- Religion is qualified as good when it promotes optimal spiritual health without heresy.

In this document, we will focus on the role of good religion in the context of good medicine and good psychology for our optimal health and wellbeing, both now and for all eternity.

Before reflecting on good religion, let us define religion. Religion is what connects our highest spiritual aspirations to our daily lived experience. The “lig” in the word religion has the same connotation as ligaments in our body. As ligaments hold our body together, religion holds our life together.

When people claim to be spiritual but not religious, they do not really understand either spirituality or religion. The opposite of spiritual is not religious. The opposite of spiritual is worldly. Religion is the bridge between what is spiritual and what is worldly. It is possible to be spiritual without being worldly, and to be worldly without being spiritual, but both of these views are actually quite religious in their own unique ways.

Every religion has three components: a set of beliefs, a set of values, and a lifestyle that is based on those beliefs and values. Every person is inherently religious in these ways. Here is an example. What religion is being described here?

- Beliefs: I create my own reality. I am in charge of my own life. I discover my own truth. I am who I am.
- Values: I make my own rules. I know what is best for me for right now. Nobody tells me what to do.
- Lifestyle: Since this life is all that there is to life, I seek power, pleasure, popularity, and possessions.

What religion is this? If you guessed atheism, you are wrong. It is polytheism! In this religion, every individual is their own god. It is all about the trinity of me, myself, and I. And what do all these supreme beings do? They fight with each other!

Let us now consider another example of a religion that holds our life together in these same three ways. What religion is being described here? The contrast here is quite intentional.

- Beliefs: We have been created by a God who revealed a plan for our happiness and our everlasting love.
- Values: Our human nature is designed for community through a law that is both natural and supernatural.
- Lifestyle: Since God put us here for a reason, we should cooperate with him for our health and wellbeing.

What religion is this? Christianity, of course! But then again, it is not just Christianity in general, but Catholic Christianity in particular, as founded by Jesus Christ himself. Let us now delve deeper into the spirituality of this kind of religion.

Catholic Christianity focuses on three important laws of life. Each of these laws builds on the foundation of the previous law, and eventually moves us from law to grace itself.

- Natural Law: the fundamental principles of our human nature by which we were created for health and wellbeing.
- Revealed Law: the affirmation and expansion of what is natural by what is supernatural for health and wellbeing.
- Gospel Law: the revelation of our ultimate destiny through the person of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

Catholic Christianity uses all of these three principles of law to provide optimal health and wellbeing both now and for all eternity. This religion holds all of these things together.

Good religion works together with good medicine and good psychology to promote optimal health and wellbeing now. However, only good religion provides us with optimal health and wellbeing in the hereafter. How does good religion do this? What is the treatment plan provided by good religion?

Catholic Christianity is a sacramental religion. Actually, to say “sacramental religion” is actually redundant. Religion seeks to do what sacraments seek to do, and vice-versa, but only Catholic Christianity makes this connection clear and obvious.

The gap between us and God was bridged by Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ continues to bridge that gap for us through the religion he founded. The sacraments that he instituted keep that connection alive and well until he returns in glory.

In the meantime, Jesus Christ promised to be with us always until the end of time. He fulfills that promise each day in the celebration of the sacraments he entrusted to his Church.