



Alton Day Of REnewal

Ministry Guidance & Safeguarding Policies

Background

In 2000 Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor invited Lord Nolan to set a framework for best practice in preventing abuse and responding to it, in whatever form, in the Catholic Church in England and Wales. The final recommendations were published in 2001 as "A Programme for Action" with a recommendation that it be reviewed again in 5 years' time. In Jan 2002 COPCA (the Catholic Office for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults) was established. The Cumberlege Commission carried out this review and reported on 16th July 2007. From the recommendations of the Cumberlege Report, on the 1st July 2008 the National Catholic Safeguarding Commission (NCSC) and the Catholic Safeguarding Advisory Service (CSAS) were established. The NCSC agree policy and ensure standards are met and policies implemented, and CSAS is responsible for driving and supporting the safeguarding practice in our Parishes and Dioceses, and Religious Orders, in all work which supports, cares for and protects the vulnerable, both children and adults.

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1. Catholic Charismatic Renewal

The Catholic Charismatic Renewal as one of the new ecclesial movements is widely present in the Catholic Church since 1967. Among many other things, it encourages the use of the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit, the charisms which are acknowledged in Scripture (I Cor 12 & 14). Among the diverse gifts are those simply called "gifts of healing". There is also reference to gifts for working miracles and for speaking words of knowledge and wisdom given directly by God.

Catholic Charismatic Renewal is not a single organized movement, but a shared understanding and expectation among some Catholics that God will act in the church today, in ways consistent with I Cor 12 & 14 including through works of healing. Many Catholics involved in Charismatic Renewal seek to pray with other people, in the hope that a healing will be given, or that God's power will touch that person's life in some way.

2. Prayer/Healing Ministry

The term “Prayer Ministry” is often used rather than “Healing Ministry”. This is for two reasons: first, that prayer might be offered for a reason other than seeking healing (e.g. praying that a person might receive a deeper experience of the Holy Spirit); second, to avoid any impression of appearing to guarantee “healing” in response to any prayer offered.

Prayer Ministry is typically offered by people praying in pairs, but could be offered by a team of three or four. In addition to those leading the ministry, there *may* be “catchers” standing behind in the expectation that some of those receiving prayer may fall to the floor under the actual or anticipated influence of the Holy Spirit.

Some people receiving prayer ministry may fall to the floor and experience a prolonged period of conscious relaxation. This phenomenon is variously referred to as “resting in the Holy Spirit” or “being slain in the Spirit”. In some cases, a person may fall not as a genuine response to an inner spiritual experience, but as a deliberate act in imitation or anticipation of what they see going on around them. Good leadership should minimize the significance of whether a person falls or not, and avoid raising expectations. In some circumstances, it may be more appropriate to pray with people who are seated. This would be best if the person was especially frail, or if the physical environment was judged to be too dangerous (see below). It may also be adopted to avoid confusion or possible panic in situations where many people present may be unfamiliar with resting in the Spirit.

Prayer Ministry includes ‘Prayer for Healing’, both of physical and of emotional ailments – the latter is often referred to as “inner healing”. The prayer may be focused on a medical need stated by the person asking for prayer, but it may also happen that one or more members of the prayer ministry team believes that God has given an indication of a different focus (this may be referred to as “receiving a word of knowledge” – or a “picture” if it comes through the visual imagination). In this case, team members must share what they believe God has given them in a way which makes no unwarranted promises, and leaves the person receiving prayer free to accept or reject what is offered by the prayer team.

The Prayer Ministry may often involve the ‘laying-on-of-hands’ with the intention either asking God to heal the recipients, spiritually, emotionally or physically. It is also used to call down God’s grace on the individuals for the release of the Holy Spirit” in their lives; this is what is commonly known as a “Baptism in the Holy Spirit” and unlike Baptism by water which only happens once when we receive Jesus into our lives, Baptism in the Holy Spirit can and should be receive many times on our Spiritual journey. This may be experienced by the recipient as a more conscious awareness of God's presence, or a deeper sense of God's love for them. It may also be accompanied by the manifestation of one or more of the many charismatic gifts.

From time to time charismatic prayer groups or diocesan teams may hold “Life in the Spirit Seminars”. This is normally a seven-session course in which the participants are led to a deeper knowledge and relationship with God. As an integral part of the fifth session, participants are prayed with for the “Baptism in the Holy Spirit”. Similar activity takes place during the “Holy Spirit weekend” which is an integral part of the well-known *Alpha* Course.

A closely related kind of prayer ministry is the ‘Called and Gifted’ programmes’ run in some Diocese to enable individuals to discern the unique set of, ‘God given’, gifts and talents the Lord wants them to use for ‘the building up and revelation of God’s Kingdom here on earth’.

These programmes encourage the development of the individual’s personal relationship with God, and a ‘new outpouring or release of the Holy Spirit’, which in turn will empower them for some specific Christian activity designed to benefit the ‘Body of Christ’, God’s church.

The Prayer ministry team prays in this case for a new release of the gifts, charisms and power of the Holy Spirit in the recipient's life; such prayers are typically referred to as "prayer for Empowerment by the Holy Spirit" or as "Commissioning for service"; this form of ministry may include the laying on-of hands.

3. General Guidelines for Prayer Ministry endorsed by ADORE

- A written risk assessment should be completed for each event.
(Frequent of events or regularly repeated activities may not require a full, comprehensive risk assessment on each occasion).
- Treat all attending with love, respect and care;
- Be wise and prudent in all decisions and choices;
- Everyone involved in ministry should subject to DBS checks by event organizers or diocese;
- Avoid being drawn into attention seeking practices;
- All physical contact should be age appropriate;
- All touch should be appropriate to the person's need;
- Minimum of two persons involved in ministry at a time, maintain gender balance;
- Work in public view, never alone;
- Do not pray with under aged children alone, pray along with family members- always within view of others.

(Sometimes healing prayer may not be sufficient for a person's needs. Where this is the case, a minor or major exorcism may be considered. These will be rare occurrences. See 6: Exorcism).

4. Risk Assessment - Principles

Whilst it is not possible to reduce all risks when working with the young or vulnerable it is possible to do all we can to minimise the risks;

A risk assessment is a written record of the thought processes that have been invested in the planning and preparation of any activity, whatever the perceived risks may be;

Risk assessments should be completed well before the event/activity and should be approved by the event leader. If in doubt, advice should be sought from the Safeguarding Office.

Risk Assessments should:

- Identify risks and hazards both indoors and outdoors, including equipment, materials and procedures;
- Evaluate the risk or hazard and identify who might be put at risk;
- Identify the action to eliminate or minimise the risk;
- Identify the person responsible for taking that action.

The following factors should be taken into consideration:

- The nature of the event/activity taking place;
- The location, routes and modes of transport;
- The competence and experience of event leaders and helpers;
- Safer recruitment practice has been followed for all event leaders and helpers;
- The ratio of event/activity leaders and helpers to participants;
- The group members age, ability, fitness, temperament and the suitability of the activity;
- Any specific medical or health needs of participants;
- Any specific needs of event/activity leaders and helpers;

- Contingency and emergency planning.
(*Frequent visits or regularly repeated activities may not require a full, comprehensive risk assessment on each occasion*).

Specific factors for consideration during the exercise of Prayer Ministry

- The medical needs of those attending a service, especially if advertised explicitly as a service of prayer for healing (NB: access to toilet facilities and First Aid; issues of disabled access);
- The communication needs of those whose sight, speech or hearing is impaired;
- Consideration must be given prior to all events and activities as to whether all those active in the ministry in whatever role, understand that role and can carry it out.
- Training in physical contact appropriate to the ministry, and as 'catchers', or first-aiders.
- Risks associated with a person receiving prayer, falling heavily, especially if frail, pregnant, or carrying a baby.
- Nature of the material covering the floor; fixed objects nearby which can obstruct a fall. If the offer of a chair is refused, then consideration should be made with regards to the "Catchers".
- Risk of injury from sharp objects being worn by the recipient, prayer team or "catcher" (e.g. jewellery, rings, bracelets, bangles, brooches etc.);
- Risk of strain to those acting as 'Catchers.' Are the Catchers physically up for the job? This should be assessed prior to every event that they are participating in and not just when they are initially appointed. This will ensure that they don't feel pressured in carrying out their duty if they are physically not up to the job due to injury or sickness.
- Awareness of emotional, physical and psychological health of recipient or effect of prayer ministry on their health. This also applies to members of the Ministry team.
- Over-confidence on the part of the prayer team members perhaps because 'the Holy Spirit will protect me' etc. Team members should remember that the Holy Spirit also grants us wisdom and expects us to use it.
- Use of restraint is inappropriate unless someone is fitting and there is a danger of them hurting themselves or others.

5. Physical Contact/Touch

There are many ways of touching and many reasons to touch, even by accident as we brush past someone. Touch is sacred and involves trust, when it is abused it is the cause of great hurt. To enter another's world is a privilege and should be done with care and clear signals of respect.

- Always ask permission to touch e.g. *"is it ok if I pray with you"? "Can I put my hand on your head"? "Have you been prayed with before"? "This is what will happen, is that ok"?* etc.
- If praying for physical pain, heart, arm leg knee etc., it may be appropriate for a team member to touch the recipient's body outside their clothing but only if they are of the same gender. Always ask the person's permission before touching them. Never touch intimate areas.
- An alternative is to ask the recipient to place their own hand on the body part and to rest your own hand on the back of theirs.

- Team members of the opposite gender to the recipient should be wary of offering any touch beyond a hand on the head or shoulder. Remember the opposite, gender code of practice is not fool proof; a person receiving prayer ministry may not be heterosexual.
- Never rub or massage the body of anyone receiving ministry.
- Awareness of our impact on others is essential, unacceptable approaches and expecting to give help, can be threatening. There is always an obligation of choice.
- Team member, is my ego involved in wanting to be seen to heal, in wanting this person to fall, or is the person and the Holy Spirit central to what I am doing? The key question in all ministry is: “whose needs are being met here? As a prayer

6. Overview

We can abuse people's rights by adding pressure on them to claim healing or by pushing them to indicate a need to fall;

We cannot guarantee confidentiality in the case of a disclosure of abuse. This must be passed on to the relevant body. This is done with an assurance of getting them help; There is a duty of care even in confessional situations today where the person must be strongly advised to report this outside the confessional forum.

People should receive training in safeguarding so that they understand the dangers and needs of the healing ministry.

7. Exorcism

The Diocesan Exorcist is the Bishop. He delegates this ministry to one or more priests in his Diocese. Much discernment is needed around exorcism. There are no definite criteria to determine whether we are dealing with possession itself, which is why alongside prayer, good discernment is essential either in the exorcist or safeguarding partner, or both. In all cases, and before any exorcism takes place, the Bishop's approval and authority is required.

Where approval is granted, the person's local Parish Priest must be made aware of all circumstances to provide confirmation that the person is who they say they are and that their immediate and longer term pastoral care is addressed.

Consideration should be given as to whether seeking professional medical assistance should be encouraged. Special caution needs to be taken where the request is for an adult or a child (18 years old or younger). Parents need to have full involvement with the exorcism process unless the child can justify otherwise and the Safeguarding Office should be contacted to discuss specific concerns and safety practice for all involved, especially the child and Clergy. Ongoing support is necessary to ensure that the child receives adequate pastoral support after such an event.

Notes: The Ministry Guidance & Safeguarding Policies endorsed and used by ADORE are based on documents produced by Pat Kennedy MPS; On behalf of the National Service Committee for Catholic Charismatic Renewal The safeguarding and Ministry of Healing documented published by the Diocese of Portsmouth. further information; contact deaconjohn@vellinder.co.uk Further general safeguarding information can also be found on www.csasprocedures.uk.net