

A SPIRIT IS THE ONE THAT REVIVES: THE PRINCIPLES OF SPIRITUAL THERAPY

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SUMMARY

Spiritual therapy starts with the belief that a man is an original spiritual being and the human spirit is the strongest source of his power. In fact the spirit is the most powerful and most important factor in a complete healing. Spiritual therapy respects and accepts all the help a person can receive from other types of psychotherapy, provided that those also respect the fundamental principles of theological anthropology and the basic two are: 1) the faith in God - the Creator of all that exists; and 2) the belief in the Biblical teaching that Man was created in the image of God Himself, and that he is therefore free, responsible and transcendent (open to God and absolute values) finding the meaning to his life in realizing the plan God intended for him. Spiritual therapy aims to help a person establish contact with the living God, the source of life and joy. The human spirit receives its being from God and if this connection is disturbed in any way, the person in whole will feel those harmful consequences. When a human spirit returns to God and establishes an authentic communion with Him through faith, hope and love, the person flourishes on all levels of its personality. The author analysis mental illnesses and proposes successful therapy in order for a healthy mind through the soul and its impact on the body to confirm the well-known saying: "A healthy mind in a healthy body". The basic principles of spiritual therapy brought in this text are: 1) Residing in peace with God, other creations and yourself; 2) Activate main abilities of the spirit: faith, hope and love within yourself; 3) Live in the liberating truth; 4) Accept and devise in faith the inevitable suffering; 5) Strengthen the power of the spirit through trust in God, prayer and sacramental life.

Key words: *diseases of the spirit - spiritual therapy - faith - hope - love - God - health - sacraments*

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INTRODUCTION

According to the modified definition of the World Health Organization (WHO), mental health is a state of complete physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being and not merely the absence of mental illness (Sartorius 1999). This definition encompasses an interdisciplinary view of a man as a physical, mental (emotional), social, and the spiritual being. Health sustains and promotes life to the man. Existing as a man and a spiritual being, authentic spirituality helps one in the therapy of not only spiritual but also physical and mental illnesses. In preventive medicine, spirituality seeks and helps the person to take a healthy, conscientious and responsible lifestyle. In curative medicine, spirituality helps to activate a strong faith that has the enormous power to restore health lost. Finally, in palliative medicine, spiritual therapy helps the dying person to alleviate his pain, to conceive of the imminent suffering, to accept the inevitable and in reconciliation with God, to move in peace from time to eternity. The principles of spiritual therapy presented in this article rely on interdisciplinary, ie integral anthropology, which observes a man in all his dimensions: physical, emotional, social and spiritual.

The wise saying "healthy mind in a healthy body" reveals a great truth as the spirit is one that revives and brings health to both soul and the body. The healthiest spirit is one connected with the Absolute Spirit, establishing contact with the living God, the source of life and joy. Since the human spirit receives its being from God, it will be the happiest and healthiest only when

living with God in unity and love upon its return to Him and establishment of an authentic communion with Him, if temporarily separated by unbelief and the grave sins. St. Paul claims that for those who love God, God turns everything for the better. In other words, a person will flourish on all levels of its personality when it is completely open to God and loves him above all. When a river dries up, it is not enough to clean the riverbed, but it needs to be reconnected with the source of water, which will clear a path then for itself and bring life to everything on its banks, reviving all it passes through. It is similar to the human spirit: when it rebels against God and separates itself from God by its grievous sin, begins to wither, losing the joy of life by starting to feel as if the existence has no meaning. Such a sick state of mind necessarily reflects at person's mental and emotional life with slipping into depression, becoming neurotic and activating various mental and psychosomatic disorders. In the end, all this is reflected on a social level as the person begins to shut oneself out, avoiding other people or becoming extremely aggressive towards others. Finally, the original shut down of the spirit also affects the physical dimension of the human person. In this article I bring first an integral anthropology that views the man as a spirit, soul and body, than I open up an analysis of mental illness and finally a successful therapy to suggest that a healthy mind, through soul and its powers, affect the health of the body. The basic principles of spiritual therapy that are brought in this text are: 1) To be at peace with God, with others and with yourself; 2) Activate the main abilities of the spirit:

faith, hope and love inside yourself; 3) Live in the liberating truth; 4) Accept and devise in faith the inevitable suffering; 5) Strengthen the power of the spirit through trust in God, prayer and sacramental life.

THE FUNDAMENTAL TRUTH ON WHICH THE DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON RESTS

"God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them"
(Gen 1, 27)

Man is a rational being who seeks convincing reasons for his existence and the ultimate goal of his existence in this world. To these existential questions about the origin and meaning of every man's life we have heard multiple answers. Some believe that everything (nature and man) came into being by chance. Others feel that this question cannot be answered while the third are convinced that a reasonable omnipotent personal and good force, in other words Almighty God, whom the Bible presents as the Creator of Heaven and Earth, all visible and invisible, stands at the beginning of everything. In the Bible we read God's words: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Gen 1: 26-27). According to the testimony of the Bible, the fundamental truth which the dignity of the human person rests upon is that of a man created by God himself, as a special being similar to him (the God). The Bible emphasizes the unity of man created by God in His own image. The human being is a single wholesome entity that functions purposefully. However, in order to better understand the mystery of a man, the Bible in the Old Testament already views him as a spiritual (spiritual), psychic (emotional) and physical (decaying) being. "The OT uses various words when denoting the wholesome entity of a human being: basar (flesh, p-t) as a weak and decaying being, nefesh (psyhé), in his concrete life with his feelings, desires and observations, ru'ah (breath, spirit), in his relationship with God, committed to his action" (Starić 2009). In this text, we adopt precisely this view of a man. In other words, we view a man as a unique being who functions and experiences himself on a spiritual, mental and physical dimension.

MAN'S SPIRITUAL LIFE: THE SPIRIT OF MAN - THE BEARER OF MAN'S PERSONALITY

"I believe that evolution progresses towards the spirit; I believe that the spirit is fully realized as a person"
(Pierre Teilhard de Chardin)

The spirit in man is the most original thing that connects him with God, from whom he receives his existence, his life, this natural transient and that supernatural eternal life. According to the theologian Karl

Rahner all human experiences of mind (thoughts) and the will power actually reveal how man - as "the spirit in the world" - experiences an absolute horizon that manifests itself as a transcendental condition of the possibility of cognition and freedom (Rahner 1977). In other words, thanks to his spiritual dimension, man can get to know (experience) and understand himself and the world around him. According to the theological understanding, "the spirit is a feature of a divine world; the human world is a body and decay, the Spirit of God is life and strength overcoming time and limitations" (Starić 2009, 219). By his bodily dimension the man is a mortal and transient being, and by his spiritual dimension, he is an indestructible and eternal being. The Spirit is eternal, immaterial and indestructible in a man. "The human spirit is what distinguishes man from all other beings; by that quality he has the ability to distinguish good from evil, the ability to wilfully choose and decide, and the ability to love; it is a synthesis of the human and divine in a human person" (Pozaić 1991). Human spirit can communicate directly to God, its Creator. By the power of his spirit, man can establish a dialogue with himself, with other persons as well as God. Human spirit receives life from God and mediates it further to his soul and body. This spirit has the power to influence our mental, emotional and physical life. Likewise, events in our body and in our emotional life affect the state of our spirit. The wholesome man is: spirit, soul and body. This knowledge is obtained through phenomenological analysis, and such definition is found by St. Paul the apostle, who writes in his epistle to the Thessalonians: "Let your whole being, spirit, soul and body, be preserved blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5:23). Although Paul mentions three realities in a man: spirit, soul and the body, he also emphasizes the unity of a man. "The terms *sárx* or *sóma*, *psyhé*, *pnéuma* which he uses do not signify so much a threefold division in the Hellenistic sense as different ways of observing man" (Starić 2009, 159-160). Spirit, soul and body are constantly interacting: receiving and sending messages to each other. The Holy Spirit works through a human spirit.

Characteristics of a human spirit

"Nothing is more accessible to the spirit than the infinite."
(Friedrich L. F. im Hardenberg Novalis)

The human spirit is rational (reasonable) and intuitive: it is open to truth and has the power to distinguish truth from lies, reality from illusion. He seeks the truth respecting the laws of logical thinking. The human spirit is free: it has a power to freely decide on something it rationally judges good for itself. Being free, man is also responsible for his choices since he makes them in freedom. Human spirit has the power of free choice. Being the strongest force in a man spirit can choose something that is difficult or unacceptable to the person's emotions and the body. Emotions are chosen according to the

criteria of liking something or not, and the spirit is guided by the criteria of whether something is true and whether something or someone really uses it to achieve the ultimate goal for which it was created. That goal is entering God's kingdom into eternal life. Man's spirit is self-conscious: by his spirit man is aware of himself and the outside world, a world around him. Only a man knows he is a man. An animal does not know that it is an animal. She does not have the ability of self-awareness, but she experiences herself by instincts and thus manages her way in the nature. Man, when he reaches a certain stage of development of his brain, becomes aware of himself and his deeds. He is also aware of the consequences of his actions. The human spirit, in addition to self-awareness, also has an awareness of God. It is the conscience - the voice of God that reveals itself within the human spirit as an imperative which a man should obey. That voice comes to the man from the God, but it is also subject to a full maturity of the attentive person listening to it. The voice of conscience is clear and concrete: it applies universal moral principles to a specific situation and tells us what is good and what is evil and at the same time seeks to do good while avoiding evil. However, because of the God given freedom, man can also reject this voice and do everything according to his own will. In this case, the voice of conscience awakens the sense of guilt and responsibility.

The mentioned characteristics of a human spirit are innate, but they are not active immediately after birth, rather activated with the time of maturation, ie psycho-physical growth.

The main duties and ways of realizing the human spirit

"Suffering is a severe trial of the spirit"
(Marie Ebner Eschenbach)

Man is the most accomplished when he activates the faculties of his spirit. These are the ability to believe, hope (trust in God) and love. Faith, hope and love are the main abilities as well as the main duties of a human spirit, which will be discussed more later on.

Diseases of the human spirit

The human spirit is sick when it is closed for God/God is neither invited nor welcome, but denied/ or it is shut away from Him/God is perceived as a prying enemy and rejected. Since a human spirit receives his being from God, when it denies or rejects God, it automatically puts itself into "a prison" and becomes unhappy. Furthermore, the spirit becomes sick when it consciously rejects the truth and good but inclines to lies and evil. With every grievous sin man closes himself from God. The greatest disease of the spirit is pride. It occurs when a man rejects God's authority and sets himself as the ultimate criteria for truth and action. Other spiritual diseases are those realities we call "the main sins": in addition to arrogance, there are also:

stinginess, envy, fornication, intemperance in eating and drinking, anger and laziness. Main sins mentioned happen mostly on the ground of the soul and emotions, ie the body and lust, but they have their root at the spiritual ground, so they should be overcome at that level.

MAN'S MENTAL OR PSYCHIC LIFE: EMOTIONS - THE TRIGGERS OF EVERY ACTION

"A spiritual transformation is an inner journey - it is a personal path of the soul by which it learns and releases but it is something that must be experienced firsthand."

(Bradnon Bays)

The man as a person, in addition to the spiritual, has also his own psychic life better known as the spiritual life. Just as the spirit is the bearer of the spiritual life, the soul is responsible for the mental or psychic life. The soul in the Bible signifies life or a living man; it is never imagined as a separate part or element. Aristotle teaches that the soul is "the first thing we live, feel and think" (Starić 2009, 160). The main abilities of the soul are: intellect, will and emotions. With the intellect a person knows the truth and with his will one decides on what he wants. On this psychic or mental level emotions that are active on the conscious and unconscious level of a person's psychic life have a great role and power. "The soul is the subject of emotions as 'a form of the body', and there are no emotions without the body. The basis of this view is a substantial unity of soul and body, which is a fundamental principle of Aristotle's and Aquinas' psychology" (Žagar 2020, 237). Man's first reaction is of an emotional nature. Also, our first judgment of what is happening to us and what we are encountering in the world is based on the emotional state that is prevailing as dominant in that moment. The wise saying about "fear having big eyes" is true. This means that a man who is greatly influenced by fear sees the situation as more dangerous than it really is. In our overall development the forms of reaction of an emotional nature grow and mature first according to the patterns we follow and only later our reason activates, too. Emotional judgment is governed by the criteria of whether I like something or not, while rational judgment introduces into this play the criteria of truth and judges on the basis of the criteria of true or false and rather real or only seemingly good. Although emotions or feelings are primarily subjective to nature, they should be taken seriously and their power wisely used in a personal life and in interpersonal relationships.

Diseases and weaknesses of the human psyche

"It's hard to fight lust because what she wants - she buys at the expense of the soul."

(Hilon)

The weakness and pathology of the human psyche is manifested in man's personal experience and his behaviour. According to emotions, three attitudes can be

embraced, two of which are unacceptable: suppressing and impulsively expressing them, while the third attitude is acceptable: expressing emotions in a controlled way and using their great power to overcome difficulties in life. Suppressing emotions of anger, sadness, the feeling of inferiority, various fears and psycho-trauma can only temporarily alleviate an anxious situation but in the long run suppressing emotions is detrimental to mental and physical health. Suppressed anger easily turns into depression and various suppressed psycho-traumas can cause mental and psychosomatic illnesses. It is also not acceptable to express one's emotions impulsively, instinctively and without any control, especially anger, because it introduces a great disturbance into interpersonal relationships and endangers a person's sense of self-worth. Only emotions that are recognized, accepted and expressed in a controlled way contribute to a good mental health and will not jeopardize interpersonal relationships. Emotionally intelligent people recognize their own and others' emotions, accept them and express them in a controlled way. A person who is spiritually firm with a strong spiritual intelligence, and that is a kind of person that wants to love authentically and knows how to, but also has a lot of patience with himself and with others. The strength of a person from the spiritual level spills over to the emotional or psychic level and helps the person to express their emotions and strong affective states of their psyche well and constructively.

Nurturing one's own emotions

"Moreover, we should try to tame the inner man rather than the body, and to break the disorderly inclinations of the soul rather than the bones. "

(St. Ignatius of Loyola)

An affectively mature person is the one who recognizes and accepts their emotions and uses their power to achieve her noble goals. Training or educating our own emotions involves observing the connections between thoughts, feelings and reactions, staying aware of their interaction as well as applying that knowledge to the decisions we make in our lives. These activities should be included in the upbringing of emotions: learn how to deal with anxiety, anger and sadness, learn to take responsibility for the decisions and actions we take. A key duty in nurturing emotions is to understand the nature and meaning of empathy: to learn how to properly sympathize with another person's emotional state, to respect other people's diversity, and to learn to work constructively with them (Goleman 1997, 271-298). In addition to the professional psychological help, healthy spirituality provides a great support and encouragement to a person's emotional upbringing and education. "Thanks to the spirituality, a person can find meaning in all situations, but when a person has meaning and works with love, nothing is too difficult for him" (Jakovljević et al. 2010, 46). Therefore, spirituality is an inexhaustible source of strength in both health and

disease. "Thanks to his spiritual dimension, man can consciously and freely make a decision to give up some behaviours of emotional nature which are not appropriate for his true development. In other words - one can sacrifice oneself accepting the cross as a mean of growth in one's inner freedom.

THE BODILY DIMENSION OF THE HUMAN PERSONALITY

When you grow up, you realize you have two hands, One to help yourself and the other to help others.

Audrey Hepburn

Man is also a corporal being. The human spirit needs a body through which it can express itself and use it also to communicate within this world. "The body is the expression, the manifestation of the soul... The body is the speech of my being: the tenderness felt by my heart will be expressed in a kiss, in an embrace or in the sexual realm. What I do with my body shows exactly what I am" (Daniel-Ange 2003, 58). Although the body is decaying and transient, it forms a constitutive part of a man. Pope John Paul II observes human body in the context of the ability to express love – a person's uttermost and final realisation. The human body with its sexuality, its masculinity and femininity, observed in the mystery of the creation, is not only the source of fertility and birth, but from the 'beginning' it contains the adjective 'marital', ie the ability to express love: precisely the love in which man-person becomes a gift and by that gift it realizes the meaning of its true being and existence" (John Paul II 2006, 15). John Paul II wants to emphasize the truth that the body is good and as such should be accepted by God. This truth is confirmed by the incarnation of Jesus Christ who takes upon himself our human, mortal body and experiences it all and the same way every other man experiences the flesh.

Finally, let's say that there is a constant dynamic interaction between all three: spirit, soul and body. We will deal with this topic in more detail in the second part where we will talk about practical application of the theory presented here: a man as a spiritual, emotional and physical being.

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF SPIRITUAL THERAPY

To be at peace with God, with others and with yourself

Only in God is peace, my soul!

Ps 62: 2

Restlessness and anxiety can be the symptoms of existential conditions as well as mental and physical illnesses. When a person is burdened with great worries, feelings of guilt, various fears, then it has no peace within and such a stressful state of the organism is very susceptible to bad moods and various diseases of spiritual, mental and physical nature. In the contrast, when a

person possesses true peace, personal satisfaction and security to work well treating God, neighbours and itself justly in the depths of its being, then the basic conditions for true happiness and maximum self-realization are met at all levels of its personality.

Man is at peace with God when he believes in Him, when he loves Him above all things and puts God first in his life. In other words: when a person obeys God's plan and obeys all God's commandments, then it also experiences the truth within as witnessed in Psalm 62, reading: "Only in God is my soul at rest."

We achieve peace with other people when we treat them fairly and correctly. The basic condition for this is to have a good will and readiness to accept the other as it is and to truly love a person. Good quality interpersonal relationships are built on the people's willingness to honestly and completely forgive those who have hurt them on the one hand and on the other hand - not to take revenge against them.

Peace with oneself is achieved when one accepts oneself as one is, when one attains a certain degree of self-confidence, when one lives according to one's conscience: honestly, justly and in good faith. Man obtains a true peace with himself when he finds and accepts the right path by realizing and affirming himself according to the plan that God has with the man in the first place. In this way, a person is realized to the extent that it is ready to die to himself, ie to his selfish desires. Jesus expressed this truth in a pictorial comparison of a wheat grain that bears fruit only when it rots in the ground. "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (Jn 12, 24).

Activate in yourself the main abilities of the spirit: faith, hope and love

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love, but the greatest of them is love.

(1 Cor 13:13).

The human spirit is realized at its most through faith, hope and love. In other words, when the person has a strong faith, when it persists in the hope of a better future putting its trust in Almighty God, unselfishly loving God and its neighbours, then it becomes the strongest and has that inner power to overcome all problems and difficulties it unavoidably encounters in a life time.

To believe in God and to believe to God

"What a man believes in and what he doubts of is equally important for the strength of his spirit."

(Marie Ebner Eschenbach)

In the nature of the human spirit lays the desire and the urge to believe. The human spirit senses and intuitively knows that one is not created by itself, but is a gifted being. In his depths, man's spirit communicates by faith with his Creator from whom he comes and to whom he is directed, to whom he aspires and for whom he longs. To prevent the human spirit from believing would

be to inflict the greatest injustice and pain on it and even to stop the course of one's true development and progress. To believe and enable the human spirit to maintain a living connection with God by faith means to wish oneself the greatest good. God is omnipotent by nature, which means that nothing is impossible for Him. He, who firmly believes in this truth, will never feel helpless in the face of a difficult situation, but will, in his distress, turn to God who has the power to overturn everything around him for good. Faith is the power in powerlessness. By faith every man enters the realm of God's action in which everything is possible, including the miraculous healings of his soul and his body. "Faith reaches with its power, therefore, beyond the bounds of death..." (Lujic 2005, 198).

Put your trust in God - activate the virtue of hope

"Hope is the dream of the awake"

(Aristotle)

The spirit of a man possesses the greatest strength when he relies on God, when he trusts in him to the end. Hope is a reality on which faith and love rely, and hope relies on God himself. Jesus spoke about it to people openly: "Therefore, I tell you, do not worry about your life: what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what will you wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air! They do not sow or reap or gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?" (Mt 6: 25-27). When a man's spirit relies on God, when he has a living hope and trusts in God as his good Heavenly Father, then a person cannot fall into depression and slip into despair. The Old Testament biblical writer says: "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will not fear evil, for you are with me!" (Psalm 23: 4).

To love God above all things, and your neighbour as yourself!

"The more love we give, the more we have left!"

(John Marks Templeton)

Because man was created in the image of God, he is best accomplished, proven and progressed when he unselfishly loves God and all His creation. God is love and he who loves is most like God. St. John the Apostle tells us: "Beloved, let us love one another, for love comes from God, and whoever loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love has not known God, for God is love" (1 Jn 4: 7-8).

We love God when we keep his commandments and live by them. Jesus says, "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Stay in my love! You will abide in my love if you keep my commandments, as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abode in his love" (Jn 15: 9-10). We love God most when we are willing to give up our will, and accept God's will and work for His kingdom. We love our neighbour when we accept him as he is, give him what he needs for his soul and body, and help him achieve the ultimate goal he was created

for: to know and love God so that after death he can enter eternal life and enjoy the Kingdom of God. An authentic love is the best therapy. He who truly believes in the love of God and allows the Holy Spirit to pour out the love of God into his spirit, soul and body, he will ultimately feel the salvation and the therapeutic effects of God's love washing through his entire being. In order for a man to experience the fullness of the power of God's therapeutic love, it is necessary to first believe in that love, and then to share it with the others. Authentic love makes us all better people, brings the sense of a personal satisfaction and welcomes us to every society.

Living in a liberating truth

"If you persevere in my teaching, you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

(Jn 8:32).

The truth is what it is, whether one likes it or not. Philosophers would say that the truth is a coincidence of a fact and one's opinion of it. However, due to a man's prejudices and emotional immaturity, he is in danger of distorting the truth, that is, of adapting it to his desires. A man is afraid of the truth that threatens the image he has of himself and therefore runs the risk of fleeing from the truth he cannot accept. By fleeing from the truth, one can escape into various diseases and addictions. Although a man is not aware of it, an irrational mechanism works inside of him and that mechanism, by suppressing the truth, can instantly reduce the anxiety that arises from the truth and always reminds him of some painful and difficult condition that he cannot accept or does not want to change. However, it is only an instant relief but causes a long-lasting painful consequence such as guilt with the activation of latent mental or psychosomatic illnesses.

The goal of a good and successful psychotherapy is to help a person get rid of the immature defence mechanisms which he is deceiving himself with and begin living the truth. Inadequate psychological defence mechanisms such as: repression, projection, denial of truth, isolation, aggression that distorts the truth, ie hides the true state of a person - must all be resolved by a successful psychotherapy in order for a person to start living the truth within oneself. Through interpretation and intervention (psychological), the therapist tries to help the patient find the right direction of progress by avoiding satisfying infantile desires for regressive transfers in the final phase of psychotherapy" (Dewald 1971, 286). God created man for truth, not for falsehood, and when man does not speak the truth with his words, but lies, then his body rebels and seeks to tell the true truth. It is a well-known "body language" that does not lie, but reveals our deep attitudes and beliefs.

In the Bible we encounter many of God's calls to man to live in truth. In Psalm 119 we read that the essence of God's word is truth (Ps 119,160). The book of Proverbs says that God loves those "who speak the truth" (Proverbs

12:22). Through the prophet Zechariah, God tells people, "Tell the truth to one another" (Zech. 8:16). St. Paul talks a lot about the need to live in truth. In the Epistle to the Ephesians, he explicitly invites us to "put the truth into practice" (Eph 4:15). Psychopharmaceuticals alleviate the symptoms of anxiety and fear, but true liberation and resolution of the existential anxiety occurs only when a person dares to live in truth, when one dares to emerge from the artificial fortress of lies and illusions.

Accept your cross and devise in faith the inevitable suffering

"If anyone wants to follow after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me"

(Lk 9:23)

Most people, especially neurotic people, often live in the illusion that they should not have any problems, that all their wishes should be fulfilled immediately. However, everyday life denies the correctness of such an attitude. That is why one of the basic principles of a spiritual therapy is to help a neurotic person seek help with leaving the illusion that "life must be easy" and that "one should not have any problems or anxieties". Spiritual therapy helps a person to accept the truth that life itself is difficult and that it is normal for people to sometimes feel the anxiety or physical and mental pain including all other troubles which more or less people in this world face to a greater or lesser extent.

Jesus did not come to Earth to free us from all our crosses, but to teach us how to accept and carry them. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Mt 16:24). The Jesuit Bernard J. Tyrrell, knowing well psychology and psychiatry, after successfully resolving a deep religious crisis, wrote the book *Christotherapy* in which he says: "He who refuses to take up the cross is crucified against his will and derives from it only one severe suffering and discord instead of feeling the joy of his own fullness and his own desperate maturity" (Tyrrell 1995, 144).

Since the cross is a symbolic expression of the fundamental division in a man himself, a person who does not accept the cross does not accept himself either. The cross is a constitutive part of our human nature. The basic dialectic or tension between our ideal self (as I would like and should be) and our real self (as I really am) represents the cross of our everyday life, ie the reality that a mature adult responsibly accepts as a challenge and a chance to make his life even more meaningful. The more mature and free a person is, the more one accepts oneself, that is, everything one carries within oneself, including the cross as a symbol of all suffering and inner division.

Although Paul says that the cross is an expression of God's wisdom, it should be said immediately that the cross is not the ultimate goal. God envisioned man's life without the cross, but man himself, through his sin, brought the cross into this world and into his life. And

then Jesus, wanting to destroy the sin of the world, accepted that cross which entered this world through sin. God through Christ abolished every cross that oppressed man on his path of seeking true happiness. God will wipe away every tear from our eyes and in the Kingdom of God there will not just no longer be no cross, but there will also be no more death nor the old world. Everything will be new and unspeakably beautiful. However, entering this wonderfully beautiful world of God, where there is no cross no more, happens only through accepting the cross in this world.

Strengthen the power of the spirit through trust in God, prayer and sacramental life

"Ask and you shall receive! Search and you shall find! Knock and it shall be opened unto you! Indeed, whoever asks receives; and he that seeks finds; and to him that knocks, it shall be opened." (Mt 7: 7-8)

Spiritual life is nourished by spiritual food. In Christian spirituality these are: the sacraments, especially penance and the Eucharist, reading Holy Bible, prayer and selfless service out of love.

The Sacrament of Penance or Reconciliation

The sacraments, as channels of God's grace, primarily mediate to a believer the grace of salvation for the soul. However, it can rightly be said, and this is exactly what the Catechism of the Catholic Church claims, that the Church continues Christ's work of "healing and saving its members". It does so through the faith and action of its ministers who are partakers of the holy sacraments. The Catechism of the Catholic Church explicitly states: "The Lord Jesus Christ, the physician of our souls and bodies, who forgave the sins of the disabled and restored his physical health, wanted his Church, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to continue the work of healing and saving its members. That is the purpose of the two sacraments of healing: Penance and the Anointing of the Sick." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 1421).

The Sacrament of Reconciliation, also called confession, is a fundamental way in the Catholic Church to relieve guilt and receive forgiveness for all sins confessed. The Sacrament of Reconciliation with God brings true "spiritual resurrection," restoring the dignity and good life of the children of God, of whom God's friendship is most precious (Lk 15:32). John Paul II in his Apostolic letter *Reconciliation et paenitentia* num. 31 said: "It should be warned that reconciliation with God results, so to speak, in other reconciliations that heal other fractures caused by sin: the penitent who is forgiven is reconciled to himself in the most intimate depths of his being, where he gets back his own inner truth; he reconciles with the brothers whom he has in some way offended and wounded; reconciles with the Church; it reconciles with the entire Universe" When a man is reconciled with God, with others and with himself, he has thus achieved the fundamental premise of a good spiritual, mental and even physical health.

The Eucharist

The Eucharist is the main food of our spirit. The body of Christ strengthens our spiritual faculties. Jesus himself said that those who eat of that bread which He will give will have true life inside themselves. To receive the body of Christ with a pure heart and a strong faith is the best that man can afford in this world for himself. "I am the living bread that came down from Heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. The bread that I will give is my body, for the life of the world", says Jesus (Jn 6:51). In the principal document *Lumen Gentium*, the II. Vatican Council teaches: Communion with the Body of the Risen Christ, revived and reviving by the Holy Spirit, preserves, increases and renews the life of grace received in baptism. This growth of the Christian life requires to be well nourished by frequent Eucharistic Communion.

Holy Scripture

The word of God contained in the Bible, ie the Holy Scriptures, is also the food for our spirit. "The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life" Jesus told his disciples (Jn 6:63). Peter answered: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of the eternal life." (Jn 6:68). Whoever regularly reads the words of God from the Scriptures and meditates on them in his heart, he strengthens his spirit and puts on a powerful shield that will protect him from the devil's arrows.

Prayer

Prayer is a fellowship with God. Prayer is a dialogue of people who love each other. In a prayer, God speaks to the man's spirit, encouraging him to persevere in God's way. In a prayer man speaks to God, too, expressing his desires and needs to Him openly and filially. Every fellowship with God that takes place in a prayer strengthens the spiritual dimension of a man and revives his spirit. Prayer in the form of meditation or speech uttered to God, has a therapeutic effect on the whole person. Any fellowship with the One who is the source of life, as this happens in a prayer addressed to the Creator and the Redeemer, has got original therapeutic effects on the supplicants.

Selfless service in love

According to the teaching of the Gospel, a man is the most and the best accomplished when he selflessly serves others in love. According to Jesus, our relationship with our neighbour will be the main criterion on the Day of His Judgment. "Come, blessed of my Father, and take possession of the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world! For I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a traveller, and you received me; I was naked, and you clothed me; I was sick, and you visited me, I was in prison, and you came to me." (Mt 25: 34-37). Authentic love is the surest sign of good mental health. Whosoever loves selflessly, finds it easier to discover the meaning of life and go bravely through various temptations in life.

PRACTICAL THERAPEUTIC MEDITATION OF INTEGRAL PSYCHOTHERAPY

*„Reading makes a full man, meditation a
profound man, discourse a clear man.“*

(Benjamin Franklin)

Integral psychotherapy respects the whole truth about the man as a spiritual, emotional and physical being, based on these religious truths:

Belief in the existence of an almighty God and his paternal love.

The belief in the need to repent of one's sins in order to establish a true relationship with God the Father, whom man has offended by his sins.

The belief that by fully accepting the will of God we are fulfilling the ultimate condition before God to give us everything we ask of Him.

The belief that God has already given us what we have asked of Him to grant us in faith, and that He has done it as soon as we have asked Him for it.

In order for a therapeutic meditation to be successful, it is first necessary to relax the body well, which is achieved by deep breathing. Then you need to calm your thoughts and emotions. This is accomplished by deep concentration and surrendering one's worries into the hands of Almighty God – the Father. We become aware of the truth that God, our Creator is here with us. We do not see Him, but He sees and hears us. Aware of this truth, that the Almighty and Triune God is with us: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, we return to the depths of our being, to our spirit which opens itself to God and establishes direct contact with Him. We do this by removing from our lives everything that separates us from God. It is a sin we are now renouncing. Let us now express our faith in God by repeating these words to ourselves: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our Saviour and Redeemer. I believe in the Holy Spirit, our Defender, Comforter and Healer." We place our trust in God, to whom we turn as our good and merciful Heavenly Father, whom we love above all things - with all our heart, with all our mind and with all our strength.

Let us now remember the image of the parched river that came to life when it merged with its source. Our spirit is now open to God and able to receive His grace. Imagine now that Heaven is opening and a river of God's grace is pouring out on our spirit. In doing so, we repeat in ourselves the words of the Father: "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done." We have our great needs and desires, but we put God's will first. We believe in Jesus' words that we will receive everything from God when we first seek the Kingdom of God and his justice, which we do now, saying these words to ourselves: "My God, may your will be done, may your kingdom of love, joy and peace come to me and to the entire world. Not my will, but Your will be fulfilled in my life." After this readiness to seek the Kingdom of God and his will first, we now express before God both:

our desires and great needs, convinced that He, our good and merciful Father, will surely hear us. Jesus tells us that when we ask God for something, and we immediately believe that we have already received it, it will be as we have believed. Deeply convinced that God is our good Father and that He loves us immensely, let us tell Him what we need the most at the moment and what bothers us the most...

With our eyes closed, let us imagine a picture of Niagara Falls or Plitvice Lakes and experience their waterfalls as the pure Grace of God that we have just asked for and that He is now releasing on us from Heaven. The greatest gift God gives us is His everlasting Love which the Holy Spirit is pouring into our spirit right now. Our spirit is the strongest centre of our power. Our spirit is now completely open to God and we experience how these waterfalls of God's Love soak our spirit throughout and we feel joy and peace deep inside. These are the fruits of God's love in us. "If a believer is faithful, obedient and believes, in a very short time the power of the Holy Spirit will be poured out into his spirit, making him strong, and providing strength for life and action." (Watchman Nee 2011)

After our spirit is soaked with the love of God by the power of the Holy Spirit, that love now spills over to another centre of the great power of our being - our spiritual life. We feel how the love of God permeates and completely overwhelms our emotions, removing fear, depressive thoughts and anxiety, giving us security and self-confidence. The Holy Spirit calls to our mind Jesus' words: "Do not be afraid, I am with you." The Holy Spirit pours joy and deep peace into our emotions. We now understand those biblical words that tell us: "Only in God is my soul at rest. My soul is longing for your Peace. Near to You, my God!"

After our feelings are imbued with the love of God that love flows further into the third centre of our power - our body. Let us experience how the love of God as living water flows through our blood vessels and our nervous system and reaches every cell of our body strengthening our immune system. Along the way, it removes everything that is sick, heals everything that is broken and infected, brings a complete health and strength to the entire body. The love of God that now permeates our body, after strengthening our spiritual and psychic immunity, is also strengthening our bodily immunity, thus creating a strong barrier to viruses and bacteria. And if someone is already infected with a virus or attacked by a disease, let him imagine that the love of God in the form of the miraculous living water is approaching the virus and it flees from his body leaving it healed and completely restored in health. With this visualization, that is, pictorial representation, we want to strengthen our faith by which we enter the world of God's omnipotence. "Let it be according to your faith", and "Your faith has healed you", as just as Jesus said to those whom he had miraculously healed. He is telling exactly that to us now!

We feel in our spirit the strongest faith, hope and love for God and our neighbour. We will now adopt the position of St. Paul the Apostle and we will say with him: "I no longer live, but Christ lives in me!" (Gal 2:20). Therefore, convinced of this truth, we are able to say: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me!" (Phil 4:13). And we feel the One who strengthens us as the Holy Spirit - the most powerful force in Heaven and Earth. In this meditation, he poured the love of God into our whole being: into our spirit, soul and body. It is this love of God that heals us and brings feelings of joy and peace into us.

CONCLUSION

"Let it be according to your faith"
(Mt 9:27)

The dignity and the strength of a man lies in the fact that he was created in the image of God. All creatures in nature are subject to a man, and he is subject only to God. That submission is not slavish, but filial. Man's connection with God is the source of his happiness and health. The human spirit communicates with God and experiences the love of God that the Holy Spirit pours into the whole human being, first into his spirit and then into his soul and his body. The awareness that he is a beloved child of God, activates positive emotions in a person and this positive emotional state is also transmitted to the body which then begins to function better, strengthens his immunity and resistance to disease. Renowned American neuroscientist Candace B. Pert, in her book *Molecules of Emotions*, says that the body, emotions and spirit together form a large "whole brain"-a kind of psychosomatic network (Pert 1999). St. Paul, the apostle who wrote two thousand years ago, thought similarly. He wrote that he is a whole man: spirit, soul and body (1 Thess. 5:23). These three entities communicate with each other and influence each other.

The title of this paper reads that the Spirit is the one that revives. One accomplishes this by firstly opening oneself to the Almighty Spirit of God from whom one receives strength and life. This is testified to all of us by St. Paul who claims that the love of God is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom God the Father sent to us Himself. The Spirit of God feeds the human spirit with the love of God when it is opened to God in faith and purity. Filled with God's love, the human spirit "soaks" the soul in the holy love of God, bringing peace

and joy to emotions. From the emotional part of the personality, the mentioned peace and joy permeate the bodily dimension of a human personality. This permeation with the holy and overflowing never ending love of God through the whole human being occurs by faith in Almighty God who loves all his creatures. The salvation of man and the therapeutic power of God's love is solely connected to the personal faith of each individual. What one believes in the most, that's what one becomes. Jesus himself said: "Let it be according to your faith" (Mt 9:27) and "Your faith saved you" (Mk 10:52).

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