

As I study the Scriptures this week, several questions came to mind:

- Why wouldn't Jesus heal from afar but got close and personal?
- Was that simply a genuine concern for the sick?
- Curiosity about their faith?
- Knowledge of the power of touch?
- A desire to encourage them to access their internal resources?

Jesus jumps and goes out to help.

What's the role of compassion in combating indifference?

We praise God for compassionate and gentle people who boldly put themselves out there to help and serve those in need. I'd like to lift up Franciscan Sister Jose Hobday.

Born in Texas to a Seneca-Iroquois mother and a Southern Baptist father, Jose Hobday was a Seneca elder and a Sister of the Franciscan Order. She had a Masters' degrees in theology, literature, architecture and space engineering, but called herself a "Student of Life" and a "Missionary-at-large." She traveled 75,000 miles a year giving lectures and workshops.

Sister Jose was one of America's most popular speakers and author on prayer and spirituality. Her stories, drawn from her own experience growing up as a Native American Catholic in the American Southwest, eloquently communicate her relationship with and commitment to God, family, community, and the Earth.¹

She was once invited to speak to a large gathering of nurses and the head nurse inviting her said she should zero in on "burnout" and how awful it is. She was very controlling and eager to dictate to Sister Hobday what she should and should not say.

¹ <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/explorations/teachers/view/156/jose-hobday>

Sister Hobday, however, always thought for herself. And her opening line went like this: "It's better to have burned out than never to have burned at all." And she went on to praise nurses for their work of generosity in helping the sick and what to do about protecting oneself including self-pacing and self-care.

I've known and learned how to navigate conflict in both my ministry life and family life. But I have not known burnout until covid hit us. I've given much during that time and by the end, when everything started moving forward again, I've allowed myself to notice how spent I was to the point of not wanting to be a pastor anymore. The sabbatical the church is allowing me to have is bringing me closer to God and a sense of wellbeing. It is also bringing back both energy and passion for ministry again. I guess that's why Jesus took off for solitary places every now and then. Burnout is good for no one.

Have you ever experienced desolation? Have you ever been left in a ditch hurting? Has fear ever paralyzed you? Have you ever known debilitating anger? How about emptiness and helplessness? Have you ever touched the bottom and prayed for it all to end?

Who jumped and came to your aid when you were hurting? Let's bring to mind the people who have come to our aid. Let's name them. Drop them a note. Let's give God praise for kindhearted people who saw us in our pain and stood by us.

Whom did *you* help in their time of need? Were they family, friends? What motivated you?

How about helping a stranger? Who are the ones you'd never come close and help but rather judge and condemn? Where would you find the motivation to trust God, go beyond your limits and help those you normally wouldn't welcome into your circle?

Healing Connections

Romans 4:13-25; Psalm 50:7-15; Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26

That's what Jesus has done for us, coming to our rescue when we were sinners at the edge of the abyss if not already at its bottom, redeeming us from our captivity, whatever that might be.

What's the use of faith if you get saved by following the law? Is it bad/sufficient to follow the law?

May we join our Redeemer Lord and jump to the aid of those who suffer. Amen.