



The Rebirth of the Clinic: An Introduction to Spirituality in Health Care

By Daniel P. Sulmasy MD PhD

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The Rebirth of the Clinic begins with a bold assertion: the doctor-patient relationship is sick. Fortunately, as this engrossing book demonstrates, the damage is not irreparable. Today, patients voice their desires to be seen not just as bodies, but as whole people. Though not willing to give up scientific progress and all it has to offer, they sense the need for more. Patients want a form of medicine that can heal them in body *and* soul. This movement is reflected in medical school curricula, in which courses in spirituality and health care are taught alongside anatomy and physiology. But how can health care workers translate these concepts into practice? How can they strike an appropriate balance, integrating and affirming spirituality without abandoning centuries of science or unwittingly adopting pseudoscience?

Physician and philosopher Daniel Sulmasy is uniquely qualified to guide readers through this terrain. At the outset of this accessible, engaging volume, he explores the nature of illness and healing, focusing on health care's rich history as a spiritual practice and on the human dignity of the patient. Combining sound theological reflection with doses of healthy skepticism, he goes on to describe empirical research on the effects of spirituality on health, including scientific studies of the healing power of prayer, emphasizing that there are reasons beyond even promising research data to attend to the souls of patients. Finally, Sulmasy devotes special attention and compassion to the care of people at the end of life, incorporating the stories of several of his patients.

Throughout, the author never strays from the theme that, for physicians, attending to the spiritual needs of patients should not be a moral option, but a moral obligation. This book is an essential resource for scholars and students of medicine and medical ethics and especially medical students and health care professionals.

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Editorial Review

Review

"*The Rebirth of the Clinic* is a highly worthwhile collection . . . Sulmasy's book is an eloquent call for medical practice as focused on relationships as one disease, with whole lives as much as isolated symptoms. It is a passionate call to embrace religion and spirituality as more than means to therapeutic ends. . . . This book is vital reading for anyone interested in spirituality, health care, and the continuing presence of the sacred in the midst of the clinic. Sulmasy's work may not transform the American health care system, but it will inspire readers to think carefully about these issues."²*American Journal of Bioethics*

"An insightful resource, obviously the product of intensive study, rigorous analysis, personal experience, and prayerful reflection. . . . There is no question that any health care professional would benefit greatly from reading *The Rebirth of the Clinic*."³*Health Progress*

Review

"Much of today's disquiet with medicine's triumphs is the gap they leave between curing disease and healing persons. In this incisive, scientifically and spiritually sound analysis, Sulmasy examines the meanings, values, and foundations of the current rubric of spirituality and health as well as its educational and practical implications. Recommended for all who still hope for a rational medicine of the person as well as of the disease."⁴Edmund D. Pellegrino, MD, Chair, President's Council on Bioethics, 2005-2009, and professor emeritus of medicine and medical ethics, Center for Clinical Bioethics, Georgetown University Medical Center

"This is a collection of heartfelt, insightful, avowedly confessional essays by a respected physician-ethicist who is a powerful spokesperson both for Roman Catholic views of health and medicine and, more generally, for the necessity of including a consideration of spirituality in clinician/patient interactions."⁵Margaret Mohrmann, MD, associate professor of pediatrics and religious studies, University of Virginia

"Dr. Sulmasy builds a scholarly foundation for spirituality as the essential element for good healthcare practice. Weaving historically derived insights with scholarly investigation and critical thought, Dr. Sulmasy convincingly establishes the case that all healthcare professionals have the moral obligation to attend to the human spirit in the healing encounter. His text is the resource healthcare professionals can use to reclaim the heart and humanity of medicine."⁶Christina M. Puchalski, MD, director, The George Washington Institute for Spirituality and Health, associate professor, Department of Medicine and Health Care Sciences and Department of Health Services Management and Leadership, The George Washington University Medical Center

"This book joins others which grapple with the meaning of caring for the dying, but it adds to them by its depth of understanding and its focus on religion and spirituality. The book reads in a personal, rich tone, which invites the reader into the experiences of the patient and physician. Dr. Sulmasy is one of few true visionaries, scholars and critics of the intersection of religion, spirituality and medicine. This work shows he knows the field."⁷Farr Curlin, MD, The University of Chicago

"Dr. Sulmasy's insight, intellect and spirituality have produced a superb philosophy of medicine and theology

of the transcendent. This excellent foundational work is given a remarkably practical application by his bedside experience in the practice of medicine. His conclusion: health care professionals have a moral duty to address spiritual issues with their patients. Amen, and again I say, Amen."?Robert D. Orr, MD, CM, clinical ethicist and professor of family medicine, University of Vermont College of Medicine

"Sulmasy's book is one of those rare works that nourishes the mind, heart, and soul. Readers will be challenged intellectually but also invited to experience the profundity of the healer-patient encounter. . . . a truly remarkable achievement."?Mark G. Kuczewski, Fr. Michael I. English, SJ, professor of medical ethics and director of the Neiswanger Institute for Bioethics & Health Policy, Stritch School of Medicine, Loyola University Chicago

"Daniel Sulmasy attempts to construct a new model of spiritual scientific medicine and succeeds wonderfully. His proposed biopsychosocial-spiritual model of health care is both an art and a science, and is deeply informed by an understanding of clinical practice and the ideals of science. Few physicians demonstrate such a mastery of medicine, its history and theological ethics. The insights into the nature and art of healing are profound. Arguments on controversial topics are handled with critical acuteness and heartfelt conviction. The writing with its use of literature and personal experience is engaging. Every physician and patient could read this work with great benefit."?Sidney Callahan, distinguished scholar, The Hastings Center

About the Author

Daniel P. Sulmasy, OFM, MD, PhD is a Franciscan friar and the inaugural Clinton-Kilbride Professor of Medicine and Medical Ethics, professor of divinity, and associate director of the MacLean Center for Clinical Medical Ethics at the University of Chicago. He received his AB and MD degrees from Cornell University and completed his residency, chief residency, and postdoctoral fellowship at the Johns Hopkins Hospital. He received his PhD in philosophy from Georgetown University in 1995. His books include *The Healer's Calling* and *Methods in Medical Ethics*. He also serves as editor-in-chief of the journal *Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics*.

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Gertrude Hoskins:

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