



To One Wounded by Sexual Sins:

First Steps to Healing

By Father Peter A. Heers, D.Th.

Introduction

Over the past few months The Orthodox Ethos has put out two short excerpts on sexual sins and healing which have generated over 130,000 views. In response we have received many letters asking for help. The letters usually contain something like the following sentiments.

Dear Father,

I am suffering...I need help. I grew up going to [usually Protestant] church during my school years. Still, I was not serious enough about it to have read even one book in the Bible. After recently encountering Orthodoxy online, I plan to visit an Orthodox Church near me soon. The reason why I am writing you is that I have been suffering from an unknown illness, of which my doctor is having a hard time diagnosing. I feel half alive. These symptoms started right after a night of promiscuity. I have severely abused my body. Is there hope for me? Can I be forgiven and healed?

Allow me to respond to this and every similar cry for help: Yes, there is hope. There is always hope. There are no accidents in life, my brethren. Our every step is taken within the providence of God. He works with our freedom — responding to our every good desire for Him. That one has reached this point — to sit down and write an

Orthodox priest for help —means that the healing of soul and body that Christ extends to every sinner is not far. The wandering, the dark and moonless nights of licentiousness, have reached their end where the fountains of tears have gathered.



"May that same God forgive thee all things, through me a sinner, both in this present world, and in that which is to come, and set thee uncondemned before his dread Judgment Seat. And now, having no further care for the sins which thou hast declared, depart in peace"

As at the base of every mountain, now we will need to make an effort, a good beginning, to ascend, but this is more than half of the battle. Courage and self-denial must now replace indifference and self-love. Prayer from the heart, patience, which requires humility, and trust must rise from the ashes. If you become a “patient” and go to the Physician’s “waiting room,” He will receive you in His hospital. Which particular “clinic” you will visit, I do not know, but to a local parish you must go. I also do not know how much the “physicians” there are working - or not - in cooperation with God’s plan of salvation for you and everyone around them. People are free, of course, to work in harmony with God’s plan, or not. But, in the final analysis this is not a defining factor. You are going to the hospital of the Church for the healing of your soul and body, and just like at a hospital for the body where you do not go because, or in spite of, the other patients, so too at the hospital of your soul. We are all there for the Head Physician, the only Sinless One, of which both staff and visitors are patients.

You ask: What do I need to get forgiveness of my sins from God and to get my body restored?

The same as everyone: return to God. Reorient to Him. Repent. (These three are synonyms.) But just as you arrived at the tragic state you are in now over time, so too will the restoration take time. Depending on your desire and zeal to implement the therapy (His will, His commandments), you will find healing for your soul and body.

As for the immediate and powerful “pain killer” — prayer — it is good to say these two short prayers as much as possible - continually if possible:

- Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me!

- Most Holy Mother of God, save us!

His mercy is our life. Her “salvation” is to bring us to Him and keep us with Him. In your soul, cry out to God and ask for forgiveness. Say to Him, from your heart: I have sinned, O Lord; I have sinned before Thee, and I cannot lift up my head for multitude of my sins. But, be merciful, O Lord; be gracious unto me and save me! Say continually short prayers in your heart, such as these:

Save me, who am despairing!

Enlighten me, who am darkened!

Purify me, who am defiled!

Cleanse me, who am stained!

Humble me, who am proud and arrogant!

Chasten me, who am slothful and lustful!

Teach me, who am dumb!

Accept me, who am unacceptable!

Save me, who am lost!

Go now to a spiritual hospital nearby on Saturday evening, early, before vigil. Speak to the priest-doctor and ask him if it is ok to come to see him, to speak to him. If by God’s providence it turns out that this parish or priest are not in a position to assist you (or you are not in a position to accept their assistance), find another “clinic” not far from you. Just as you would search for a good doctor for your body, you need to do the same for your soul, with the difference being that every parish has the same Physician - the Lord Jesus Christ - even as the Physician’s helpers change.

Sometimes, however, these helpers can really help and other times they can be less than helpful. And there are also “kook-Doctors,” charlatans, who are not “board-certified” and do not know the healing arts; these are the various Heterodox

alternatives. They are certainly well intended, most of them, but not well informed or trained, and so it is best to not put ourselves under their “surgeon’s knife.”

So, go and see Christ, the Physician, at His hospital infirmary near you. Pray as you go. Ask Christ to help and guide you. And I will pray for you, too. Now that you’ve arrived this far, don’t worry! The Physician is in this House. Our Father stands, waiting for your return (repentance). Don’t delay, but also don’t be anxious. Trust Him with every step of return, for He has led you, or rather carried you, all along.

<https://www.orthodoxethos.com/post/to-one-wounded-by-sexual-sins-first-steps-to-healing>

