



INFLUENCE OF HEALING MINISTRY ON PSYCHO-SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING OF CHRISTIANS AT THE MERCIFUL JESUS SANCTUARY OF RUHANGO, RWANDA

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Abstract: *This study aimed at understanding the Influence of Healing Ministry on the Psycho-Spiritual Well-Being of Christians at the Merciful Jesus Sanctuary in Ruhango, Rwanda. The study used convergent research design and mixed research approach (both quantitative and qualitative methods). The target population was 102 Christians and among them, 81 participants were selected for this study as the sample size. Simple random sampling techniques and purposive techniques were used. Questionnaires, interview guides and focused group discussion schedules were used to collect data. From the results, Healing Ministry influences strongly the psycho-spiritual well-being of Christians who go for prayer at the Merciful Jesus Sanctuary of Ruhango. Findings also confirmed that, there is a superpower that is able to heal all kinds of illnesses among Christians benefiting from the sanctuary. This power also, changes the life of some Christians who visit the Sanctuary at Ruhango. Psycho-spiritual therapy, listening, personal prayer, adoration prayer, meditation prayer, forgiveness, workshop or spiritual education, and all kinds of spiritual exercises are important ways through which Jesus heals people and provides solutions to all kind of problems. This study concludes that, Christians of the Catholic Church still believes in the healing ministry of Jesus Christ. More so, healing ministry is based on prayer in the name of Jesus Christ; those involved in this ministry should be prayerful, regularly practicing Christians who acknowledge his healing love and are willing to pray and listen for guidance in order to minister appropriately to others. The study therefore recommends: that, there is a need to value Psycho-spiritual therapy; People's privacy and dignity should be respected and protected; Where Counselling and psychotherapy are needed, these should be provided by accredited counsellors and therapists who adhere to the codes of ethics and practice of their regulatory organizations.*

Keywords: *Healing Ministry, Psycho-Spiritual well-being, Christians, Faith*

1.1 Background of the Study

Human being is created free to live a healthy life that helps him to live with others harmoniously and have a good relationship with God. Sometimes, we may experience deviations from the norm and face ill health, be emotionally, psychologically, socially or spiritually broken. Bickenbach (2015) on WHO's 1948 definition of health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not

merely the absence of disease or infirmity explains. Generally, most of the times we have deviations in relation to these aspects denoting a healthy life but the underlying factor here is the state of our social functionality. This definition means that, so long as you can make proper judgement, physically function and live well with others in the society, you remain health even though you might be having some deviations in the above three aspects. To regain health after illnesses, we usually take medications for treatment or a therapy to manage the situation. This is noted from the works of Allen (2005), who claims that psycho-spiritual therapy or conventional medications are effective in the treatment process. Furthermore, Bradshaw et al (2022) confirmed the link between healing ministry and the psychological well-being of Christians in America when they remained attached and focused to him. His study points out that the benefits of Healing Ministry for human being are many and profitable because it brings the divine intervention in human life. The modernity medicine, psychotherapy and counselling are sometimes limited or challenged as Cook et al., (2017) highlighted in the study done also in America. Healing Ministry contributes positively on the psycho-spiritual well-being of everybody who is conscious of it.

The psycho-spiritual well-being can be defined as a feeling of communicating with the others, having meaning and goal in life and having belief and relation with an exalted power. It should be integrated in the holistic healing as confirmed by (Oumarou, 2004). According to Ruggeri et al., (2020), Well-being has been defined as the combination of feeling good and functioning well; the experience of positive emotions such as happiness and contentment as well as the development of one's potential, having some control over one's life, having a sense of purpose, and experiencing positive relationships. Thus, some authors such as Medlock et al.,(2021), in their study done in University of Georgia, defined well-being as experience of happiness, living with meaning, connectedness and absence of problems.

Healing ministry in the Catholic Church patents from the ministries of Jesus Christ. The Gospel of Matthew talks more about it: "*Jesus went about teaching and preaching the good news of the Kingdom in Galilee. He healed every sickness and diseases of people*" Mt 4: 23. So, healing forms part of human faith and leads people toward salvation. By his healing Ministry, Jesus gives hope and comfort to those who are sick and in need. By Healing Ministry, Jesus introduced those who were healed from state of psycho-spiritual problems.

Nwogu (2014) stated that spirituality increases the well-being of people who are sick. Thus, Healing Ministry as one of the components of spirituality is a key factor which contributes a lot on the psycho-spiritual well-being of Christians. The Church understood it from the beginning. The book of Acts of the Apostles tells of many miracles performed through the hands of the apostles to great crowds. For the early Church, healing was a normal part of the Christian life. All healings and miracles were accomplished through prayers and laying on of hands by the apostles (Acts 3, 1-6).

In the University of Washington, Egnew (2005) found that, healing has been linked to the themes of integrity, storytelling, and spirituality. In the same line, Azzopardi (2019) talked about Christianity as a potential provider of wellbeing whereas Park (2011), in the study done in University of Virginia, pointed out that healing is more about relationships with oneself, with others, and with God. For him, holistic healing is the process of being restored to bodily wholeness, emotional wellbeing, mental functioning, and spiritual vitality. Holistic haling may also referred to as the process of reconciling broken human relationships and to the development of a just social and political order among races and nations. Healing Ministry is a gift from God. It is a gift from Heaven given to human being for his wellbeing. In the German Institute for Medical Mission, Bartmann et al., (2021) affirmed that human being should desire the Healing for his well-being. According to Driscoll, (2018) Catholics encounter the fullness of the Trinity, leading to healing of the whole person, through the celebration and participation in the Eucharist.... mind, body and Spirit are made whole by our thanksgiving to the

Father, through the Son and in the Holy Spirit as our participation in divine life. This study raised a point that shows the great importance in seeking the psycho-spiritual well-being of a person, who, before was sick, but becomes well after healing.

Manus et al., (2020), from the University of Ottawa Canada, described the mission of Jesus and His disciples as a ministry based on healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, raising the dead, casting out devils. A great work of Jesus was the work of restoration of physical, mental, and spiritual aspects of life. According to Omi, (2012), healing was an important part of the mission of Jesus and the apostles. This ministry continued throughout the history taking many forms in order to bring wellness to believers. Thus, the Church respects the law received from Jesus, when he said to his disciples before ascending to the Father *“go out to the whole world; proclaim the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned; these are the signs; in my name they will cast out devils; they will have the gift of tongues... They will lay their hands on the sick, who will recover”* (Mark 16, 15-17). Until today, these words are accomplished in the lives of those who believe, and then they become a great contribution on the psycho-spiritual well-being of all believers in Christ Jesus through faith.

As well, many studies about Healing Ministry were carried out explaining it deeply and showing its importance to the lives of human beings. A study carried in University of South Africa by Pretorius, (2009) clearly revealed that many people are suffering from terminal illness or illnesses and they cannot afford medical treatment but turn desperately to preachers who claim to offer divine healing. According to the author of this article, divine healing is the last resort. Richman, (2021) concurs with this by what he calls the miracles of healing with psychology and religion. Pohran (2015) claimed that, spiritual healing is a ubiquitous and fundamental part of charismatic Christianity; it is inextricably linked to understanding God, society, and individual identity. In the same perspective of charismatic, Csordas, (1988) argued that healing practice is a process that ends always on well-being of the person because all people who seek healing want to be well in their bodies, minds, hearts and souls. The contributions of the Church to them, is to give what they miss; to feel well in their bodies, minds and hearts. It is one of the ministries of Merciful Jesus Sanctuary of Ruhango.

In Rwanda, Christians believe in Healing Ministry because as Schauer et al., (2016) claims, nature builds connections. In this case, Rwandans are connected to God because, human being by nature is spiritual. From the perspective of healing, they believe that God is able to heal all kinds of sicknesses. Christians flock for miraculous solution to their problems and healing at the Merciful Jesus Sanctuary of Ruhango. The results of this Ministry are visible by those who keep going to seek help there. Some of the Christians who go to this Sanctuary change positively and become comfortable, healthy, or happy. Ngamaba & Soni, (2018) found that individual religiosity and country level of development play a significant role in shaping people’s subjective well-being. The Healing Ministry contributes a lot on the transformation of Christians at Ruhango and has the influence on their psycho-spiritual well-being. These extraordinary signs of this ministry started in 1992 with father Stanislas Urbaniak, parish priest of Ruhango with a small group of Charismatic. They started by praying for the sick who, during the prayer, got healed. There were signs which showed that the power of God was with that small group. After a short time, the group became strongly supported by the Emmanuel Community. Then, after the genocide, prayers and Masses of healing became greater than before. Bishop Anastase Mutabazi of Kabgayi inaugurated the place of Ruhango in 1998 and he called it *“The Centre of the Merciful Jesus”*. In 2014, the new bishop of Kabgayi, Simaragide Mboniyentege, changed the status of Ruhango, from *“Centre of Merciful Jesus of Ruhango”* to *“Merciful Jesus Sanctuary of Ruhango”*, this is the name of the Sanctuary till date which is abbreviated as MJS.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

This study explored the Influence of Healing Ministry on the Well-Being of Christians at *Merciful Jesus Sanctuary of Ruhango*. The Healing Ministry performed in this Sanctuary provokes many questions and especially by people who do not understand what happens in the healing ministry. Some Christians, even priests doubt about the Healing Ministry performed at Ruhango. The problem of many is to know what happens when the act of healing is realised in the person, how Jesus communicates to those who pray for the people and the power and authority behind commanding healing or resolving people's problems in the Sanctuary.

According to the testimonies given by those who proudly attest that they are healed through the Miraculous Healing, the Healing Ministry can be a true reality that happens in the Sanctuary. However, there are serious problems with people who do not recover from their illnesses or either their problems remain unresolved. These Christians may feel disappointed discouraged, frustrated, short changed, angry and they, perhaps, can lose faith in the Healing ministry and in God. Further, some may move to other Churches seeking to have the miracles and have their problems resolved. Thus, this research attempted to find out the experiences of Christians in relation to Healing Ministry. Few researches similar to this have been undertaken in the same location.

1.3 Research Objectives

The study objective in this research was to establish the influence of Healing Ministry on the Psycho-spiritual well-being of the Christians in *Merciful Jesus Sanctuary at Ruhango, Rwanda*.

1.4 Literature review

Theoretical review

This study was guided by the Faith Development Theory of James William Fowler III (1940-2015). Theoretically, James Fowler's Faith Development Theory is presented as an account of the stages through which faith passes during the human life cycle. The fullest statement of his faith development theory is to be found in *Stages of Faith: the "psychology of human development and the Quest for meaning"* which was published in 1981. In this book Fowler sets out his six stages of faith, the concept of faith which informs these stages, and the story of how his developmental theory came into being (Leach, 1997).

There are six stages of Faith Development Theory. These steps were very important for this present research which was focusing on Christians who have different psycho-spiritual problems. Fowler's work is not focused on a theory of faith per se, but on how individuals structure the meanings of their lives. (Andrade, 2014). According to Haggray (1993) there is pre-stage: Infancy and undifferentiated Faith. ***The emergence of trust (0-2 Years)***. In the preliminary stage, which is known as undifferentiated faith, the seeds of trust, courage, hope, and love emerge in an undifferentiated way and struggle with the perceived threats of abandonment, contradictions, and hardships in the environment of an individual infant. This stage was very helpful for the Christians who have the contradictions in their belief. The findings of research showed that some people have the contradictions in their faith.

Stage 1 intuitive-Projective Faith (2-6 years): This phase is the imaginative and imitative phase in which the child can be powerfully and permanently be influenced by examples, moods, actions, and stories of adults' visible beliefs. This phase plays a great role in unearthing how Christians are influenced by others to go to the Sanctuary.

Stage 2 Mythic-Literal Faith (10 years): In this stage, the person begins to adopt for himself the stories, beliefs and customs that symbolize belonging to his community. In the present study, this stage helped to understand the Christians who consider the Sanctuary and its members as one of their families. They go there, maybe by influence of others, but afterwards they can independently go by themselves.

Stage 3 Synthetic-Conventional Faith: Through this stage, God is viewed as a loving, of companion, one who guides, and of personal support. God becomes very personal to the individual. This theory at this stage is more helpful for the Christians in trouble to know that God still loves them. Many Christians at the Sanctuary need to feel the presence of God and to be consoled by Him. This stage is very powerful for this study. This is the stage where individuals don't need much influence to understand the reason behind their relationship with God.

Stage 4 Individuated-Reflective Faith: This stage reveals the growth of person in the faith by confirming him/herself in the faith. The person gets his/her own identity. He/she gains authority from within.

Stage 5 Conjunctive Faith: During this stage, the person develops a healthy sense of cognitive and affective adaptation to reality. The truth in this phase is multidimensional and organically interdependent. This stage is helpful for the Christians who go to the Merciful Jesus Sanctuary of Ruhango to choose and be stable in their religion after finding the truth.

Stage 6 Universalizing Faith: In this stage, a believer believes that God is beyond doctrine and creeds and is free to do what God wants. Individuals who reach this stage are exceptional individuals whose redemptive nature leads to concern for the downtrodden and less fortunate in society. The stage of Universalizing Faith is very important for the members of E.C (Emmanuel Community) who pray for the Christians in need and also for the Christians who come at MJS of Ruhango seeking for help. They need to be strong in their faith.

Faith is an important aspect in human life, in his total healing and his well-being. This theory helped the researcher to explore the Influence of the Healing Ministry on Well-Being at the MJS of Ruhango. It also helped to investigate about Christians in the Sanctuary and their difficulties. It also helped in making an observation and the growth of becoming integrated, stable and autonomous. Theory of faith development is important in this study in relation to Christians who need to grow in realistic faith. Faith helps us to shape our lives in relation to reality. Faith sustains our lives, guarantees our being and belief in oneself. Faith moves us towards the centre of being, power and values. Therefore, this theory shows the importance of growing in faith among the Christians who visit MJS. It unveils the importance of creating awareness about faith and the necessity of spiritual formation. People therefore needs to be informed and formed about faith in order to grow in it.

Empirical review

Healing ministry can happen in many ways. Often when people are worshipping God, He heals them. A Mixed method research carried out by Draper, (2014) in University of Central Florida on Catholic Healing Masses: Intercessions of Health and Healing in Yucatan. Data were gathered using participant observation, face-to-face interviews, and questionnaires. The study used 38 individuals voluntarily who participated in this research. The researcher was helped by translator so, over the course of 55 days, the translator and the researcher collected 26 completed questionnaires and 12

structured face-to-face interviews. Results showed that, those who attended Healing Masses received miracles; those who were suffering from depression received the reparation of their mental state; those with experience of divorce were restored; during healing Masses all kind of sicknesses were cured and many abnormal situations become normal. Those who attended masses specifically oriented towards reparation of the mind, body, and spirit recognized an alternative manner in which their holistic person could be healed. Similar findings were realized by writers and researchers like (Manala & Theron, 2009) who wrote about the need of Healing Ministry.

Magagula, (2019) carried out a study on a practical theological study of the efficacy of the Roman Catholic Church. Witbank Diocese's teaching regarding the healing ministry: Towards the development of an integrated and intercultural healing ministry, done in the University of South Africa. The study utilized qualitative and quantitative methods to collect data with 51 participants from the Diocese of Witbank, among them 14 priests, 5 deacons, 9 Catechists, 13 lay people and 10 young people. Findings showed that the healing ministry in the church is relevant. Priests performed rituals towards the sick. This was done through prayer for the sick by use of Holy water, anointing oil, use of incense, distribution of communion, laying on of hands and confessions. All these were aimed at helping the faithful spiritually and psychologically to tackle their problematic situations with the hope that those who are afflicted can experience a transformation in health and a spiritual renewal. It is believed that this healing is by Lord Jesus Christ using the intercessions of the priest. This review is relevant to the present study because it gives in details elements that are used in the Healing Ministry. The same elements are used in the Sanctuary of Ruhango. However, one element makes a difference between this review and the present study. The researcher found that, in the Sanctuary, it is not only the priest who prays for the people, but also a team of Christians as well.

1.5 Methodology

This study used mixed research methods and convergent research design. Quantitative and qualitative techniques were combined with the purpose of complementing each other to enrich the quality of data collected. Target population for this study was from two groups of the Christians who were doing their retreat of three days from 17 to 19 December 2021. In total, they were 102 Christians. Questionnaires and interview guides were used to collect data from the participants. The qualitative data was described, coded, analysed and presented in thematic and narrative forms. The quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistical techniques with the help of Statistical Packages for Social Sciences - IBM (SPSS) version 26 and presented in tables. The study gave the participants an opportunity to express their points of view and experiences beyond what was asked in the quantitative questionnaires. This opened up space for an in-depth understanding on the influence of the Healing Ministry on the Psycho-Spiritual Well-Being of the Christians at the Merciful Jesus Sanctuary of Ruhango. Thus, twenty-five (25) Christians were chosen among other Christians for interview. From them, 16 were women and 9 men Christians. Among 25 Christians, fifteen (15) Christians participated as individual interviewees and ten (10) constituted the focused group discussion.

1.6 Findings and discussion

The researcher summarized the target population at the Merciful Jesus Sanctuary of Ruhango, Rwanda. The researcher used 56 questionnaires and interviewed 15 participants and had 6 participants from a Focus Group Discussions (FGD) who were pilgrims at the Merciful Jesus Sanctuary of Ruhango, Rwanda. Table 1 below shows the sampling frame.

Table 1: Questionnaire and Interview Distribution and Return Rate

Category	Target population	Returned and Analyzed	Percentage (%)
Quantitative	56	56	100
Qualitative	25	25	84
Total	81	81	100

Source: Field data, 2022

From the above table, there were a total of 81 participants, comprising 56 for the quantitative approach and 25 for the qualitative approach. Both, quantitative and qualitative response had 100% response rate. This is can be justified by the fact that, the researcher used face to face approach to collect data.

Knowledge of the physical and psychological suffering and healing of Christians at the Merciful Jesus Sanctuary of Ruhango, Rwanda

The healing ministry at the Merciful Jesus Sanctuary of Ruhango contributes a lot to pilgrims’ psychological and psycho-spiritual well-being. There is a strong relationship between pilgrims and the healing ministry at the Merciful Jesus Sanctuary of Ruhango. The study investigated the understanding of healing ministry in the lives of Christians at the Merciful Jesus Sanctuary of Ruhango. The data obtained in this regard was analyzed and presented in the table 2.

Table 2: Levels of Knowledge of the Healing Ministry

Statements	SA		A		N		D		SD		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
I believe in the healing Ministry. I have experience of it.	52	92.9	3	5.4			1	1.8			56	100
Healing Ministry heals Christians who come to the Sanctuary of Ruhango	33	58.9	18	32.1	1	1.8	2	3.6			56	100
The Healing Ministry assists Christians in reconciling with God	55	98.2	1	1.8							56	100
The Healing Ministry helps Christians to reconcile with each other	50	89.3	3	5.4	3	5.4					56	100
The Healing Ministry assists people in forgiving themselves.	51	91.1	4	7.1	1	1.8					56	100
The Healing Ministry heals incurable illness at Ruhango Sanctuary.	36	64.3	17	30.4	3	5.4					56	100
Many Christians believe in healing miracles in the Sanctuary of Ruhango.	47	83.9	5	8.9	2	3.6	2	3.6			56	100
Healing Ministry heals psychological suffering at Sanctuary of Ruhango.	47	83.9	5	8.9	2	3.6	2	3.6			56	100

Source: Field data, 2022

The above analysis shows that, majority of participants (98.2%) reported believing in healing ministry because they have experienced it, while 1.8% did not experience or witness such. This is a clear indication that most of the participants had experienced and witnessed the works of healing ministry at the Merciful Jesus Sanctuary of Ruhango. This fact was confirmed through various interviews with the participants. For example, participant 4 shared her experience as follows:

“At first, I came here alone, and I experienced it myself because the Lord healed me from my blindness and even healed me from the wounds of the heart. The Lord gave me another chance to be here again with my two children, and He healed them, both were completely cured. He healed another of the orphan’s wounds of heart from genocide of 1994, I found a baby abandoned by his parents during genocide, I took him, but he had many psychological problems. After some few years, we came here with him, the Lord healed him. Wherever I will be, I would say that the Lord heals because of my blindness was healed and different sicknesses of my two children healed. I have also witnessed other people coming here with different kinds of diseases and problems. They all receive healing and their problems are gone. I can confidently testify that Lord Jesus is our Saviour when one accepts Him with a sincere heart”. (17th Dec.2021).

Similarly, another FGD participant 16 shared his experience as follows:

“I know that, the prayer of healing ministry is so helpful. I started coming here in the year 2000. I would like to give an example of my son. He was diagnosed with epilepsy and had symptoms similar to those of a person with acne. I took him everywhere, but it did not work, he was not healed. I assure you that myself, I have knowledge of medicine, I know what I was doing and what I say here. I say what I know. Someone told me about the prayer for healing ministry at the Merciful Jesus Sanctuary of Ruhango. From there, I started the way of prayer and the time has come for us to start taking him to Ruhango; on Thursday in the Healing Mass, during the consecration, he fell to the ground again and was taken to the sacristy, they prayed for him. Then one of those who prayed came to tell me that my son is ok. After a while a priest was given a prophecy and told me that your child was healed. When my son came out, I asked him what had happened and he told me, ‘Today I saw a lot of light.’ From other experiences I have witnessed here at Merciful Jesus Sanctuary of Ruhango, I testify that the Lord really saved my son” (18th Dec. 2021).

Based on these findings from the questionnaire and from the researcher’s observations during the interviews and the focus group discussions, it is worth noting that, Christians believe in the Healing Ministry at the Merciful Jesus Sanctuary of Ruhango. This justifies the reasons why many people, believers and non-believers go to Ruhango by crowds. The findings showed that all kind of sicknesses are healed through the Healing Ministry at the Sanctuary of Ruhango.

Regarding the statement “Healing Ministry heals all Christians who come to the Merciful Jesus Sanctuary of Ruhango”. Majority of the participants, 33 (58.9%) strongly agreed, 18 (32.1%) agreed with the statement, while 2 (3.6%) disagreed and 1 (1.8%) was neutral. Findings of this study showed that most Christians who come to the Merciful Jesus Sanctuary do receive healing. However, a few have witnessed some Christians who did not receive healing. Participant 2 said:

“It is clear that Jesus is present. Those who are not satisfied do not return. Those who came to Jesus and found what they wanted, return to give witness. The prayer of healing ministry has changed me and allowed me to embrace it in my own life. I got married and I could not have children until I started having problems with my husband, and thirteen years later, we divorced. He went his way and I did the same. I started coming here, and my life changed positively. Actually, I am happy and I have peace because I came here. Through the Healing Ministry, Jesus healed my memory. What I would like to add is that Jesus is in the Holy

Sacrament of the Eucharist. Today, I have inner peace because after our divorce it was very difficult for me to live. Coming here healed my heart that had been broken by the situation I was going through before and after divorce. Since I started to come here, I relaxed and recovered from the wounds of the heart.” (17th Dec.2021).

Yet another participant 5 expressed

“The prayer of healing ministry, which I learned in 2007, was the beginning of my fulfilment. I saw many miracles of Jesus, and he did a miracle for me. I say this because since 2007, I have heard testimonies from more than three people every first week of the month about how people got rid of various illnesses such as diabetes, hepatitis, cancer, HIV/AIDS, heart attacks and how people got jobs. Others were healed from being blind. I have heard and witnessed many Christians testimonies about the prayer healing ministry. Myself, I experienced it. The Lord Jesus healed me from the back that refused to heal by modern medicine. I came here on the Saturday before the prayer for the sick done on each first Sunday of month. So, I spent the night in the valley in prayer with other Christians. The next day, Sunday, the Eucharist was offered, and at the end of Eucharist Celebration, they prayed for the sick. Miraculously, I was healed. I went back home. After some days, I went back to the hospital to see the doctor. The doctor did exams, then, the results confirmed that I was healed”. (17th Dec.2021).

The two participants in the interview complement the quantitative findings showing that through Healing Ministry, all kind of illnesses are miraculously cured at the Merciful Jesus Sanctuary of Ruhango. This is consistent with the findings of the study carried out by Draper, (2014); Viljoen (2014) and Maragh (2006) in their different studies about healing. All of them noted that the healing ministry is about restoring the whole person.

Those who stated that the healing ministry helps Christians to reconcile with God were 55 (98.2 %) strongly agreed, while 1 (1.8%) agreed. This was supported by evidence from the interviews. One interview guide, participant 7 had the following to say about being reconciled with God and noted that:

“What I would say has changed in my life is to live without worries. Problems are always with me but I trust the Lord. I settle for it and wait for the answer I feel calm. The key is to have faith in the Lord. Everywhere Jesus heals and every time we go to Him, He saves us”. (17th Dec. 2021).

It was in group discussion whereby an FGD participant 21 reported:

“When I came here, I was asked to offer an intention and I was asked to go to the confession. It was difficult for me, because I thought that I had no sins. But a short time after, when the procession started, I felt a need for confession. I said to myself that I wanted a white priest who cannot understand what I will tell him as sins. So, I did not know how, I went to the priest, as I said, a white priest who could not understand what I was saying. It was what I thought because my sins were so many, but after confession, I felt free. I had inner peace. From that time, I got the gift of courage to approach the sacrament of confession. For more than 20 years, I have not wanted penance. When I said that to my colleagues, they laughed and laughed about me. I felt guilt. I tell you the truth, I have committed many sins. Since then, this prayer of healing ministry has nurtured in me the zeal to receive the sacrament of penance. This sacrament healed and strengthened me”. (18th Dec. 2021).

The researcher was amazed to hear about the affirmation and confirmation of the reality of healing at Merciful Jesus Sanctuary of Ruhango. The participants talked about Jesus like someone whom they see and touch nicely. They were very happy to express what they, in the past, have experienced about Healing Ministry. Some of them were young in faith. But they became mature.

Regarding whether healing ministry helps Christians to reconcile with each other, majority of the participants, 50 (89.3%) strongly agreed, 3 (5.4%) agreed while the remaining 3 (5.4%) were neutral.

Families have been reunited, according to participant 14, who believes that whenever they come to sanctuary, Jesus bestows upon them the fortitude and courage to reconcile with their spouses. The participant had the following to say about this situation:

“There are the people who shared what they have experienced in marriage here in the past and how they have really changed. Christians can really change. Those who come prepared to separate. They reconcile during prayer. It is Jesus who unites them again. Those who come with less faith and return completely changed, those who come with resentment and vengeance and return with forgiveness in mind. Personally, I came here and I was asked to forgive, I did it, and I felt peace with myself and relaxed within. I have experienced both forgiveness and inner healing since I began to attend this prayer of healing ministry (17th Dec. 2021). Likewise, the respondent 7 affirmed that “since I started coming here, I avoid to have conflicts with other persons”. (17th Dec. 2021).

Out of the participants who reported healing of incurable sickness and diseases at the merciful Jesus Sanctuary of Ruhango, 36 (64.3%) strongly agreed, 17 (30.4%) agreed, while 3 (5.4%) were neutral. This implies that a total of 94.7% of the participants had experienced some kind of healing from incurable sickness at the Merciful Jesus Sanctuary of Ruhango. This finding is also validated in the interview responses. For instance, participant 13 reported feelings of being in a situation of gratitude to Jesus, and her words captured the situation where she was healed and she also witnessed testimonies of various people who were healed from incurable sickness on the ground, as she stated:

“Many people come here several times, and those who have serious illness, those who are barren, those who are depressed, and even those who have a good life do come. In 2015, the couple was found to be HIV positive and came here to pray several times. Later on, they were found to be cured of the disease. Last year, I heard someone who was giving his testimony about the way he was healed from cancer through the prayer of healing ministry”. (17th Dec. 2021).

These findings reveal the reasons of the large assembly on the days of Healing Mass at Merciful Jesus Sanctuary of Ruhango. Different participants affirmed to have seen and heard the testimonies of the people who were seriously sick, when they came to Ruhango, they got healing. Majority of them confirmed to have seen and heard those who got healing of incurable sickness at Sanctuary of Ruhango. These results are in line with other researchers who previously expressed the power of healing ministry and how it is a need for the people such as (Romeo, et al., 2015); (Chepkwony, 2019).

Regarding the beliefs in healing miracles in the Merciful Jesus Sanctuary of Ruhango, most of the participants 47 (83.9%) strongly agreed, 5 (8.9%) agreed, 2 (3.6%) were neutral, while 2 (3.6%) disagreed. This is a strong indication that most of the participants experienced a healing miracle or witnessed it through various witnesses in the sanctuary. A combined majority of the participants, amounting to 52 (92.8%), believed in the healing miracles in the Merciful Jesus Sanctuary at Ruhango. Participant 19 in the FGD noted that:

“It exists, because even the testimony itself confirms it. I have seen patients come and get healed, and many people still come today because if it does not work for them, they cannot come back here. There is so much evidence because I have seen healing miracles in this place. I have seen people fall down during the procession of the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, and I have seen possessed people with demons get up and shout because they see Jesus in the sacrament of the Eucharist. I saw a girl who came here blind and she received her sight and now she is really beautiful woman with beautiful children. I have seen many people coming here tied up and back to their homes well and sound to do their normal jobs. The other one came here with broken hips, could neither sit nor walk was pushed in a wheelchair, and now he

is walking. I have seen many barren people for more than twenty years. Now they have given birth and have good babies. What I saw in the prayer of healing ministry is a lot because I saw people who received visible healing”. (18th Dec. 2021).

These findings demonstrate the role of faith in the life of the Christians at Merciful Jesus Sanctuary of Ruhango.

“The Healing ministry is committed to healing psychological sufferings such as depression, anxiety, stress, and trauma at the Merciful Jesus Sanctuary of Ruhango”. Regarding this statement, the reports from the interview showed that the majority of Christians who come to the sanctuary are overwhelmed by depression, anxiety, stress, and trauma caused by their life burdens such as sickness. Most of the participants, amounting to 52 (92.8%), agreed with the statements while 2 (3.6%) were neutral and disagreed with them. One interview guide, participant 11 had similar sentiments when he stated that:

“What I would say has changed in my life is that I now live without worries. Problems are always with me, but I trust the Lord. I settle for it and wait for the answer. I feel calm. The key is to have faith in the Lord. Everywhere Jesus heals, and every time we go to him, he saves us. This prayer had a vital impact on my life as a Christian”. (17th Dec. 2021).

From the above findings, what is said can be considered like verity because this was sustained by the reflection of Magagula, (2019) who said that the healing ministry in the church is relevant, and Reno, (2020) who said that the healing power of Christ often comes as comfort and consolation, helping us to face our trials with courage and even good cheer. Similarly, this is in line with the findings of Maragh (2006) reporting that the healing ministry of Jesus as recorded in the synoptic gospels shows Jesus' commitment to restore the whole person.

1.7 Conclusion

The present study aimed at exploring the influence of Catholic Church Healing Ministry on Psycho-Spiritual Well-Being of the Christians at the Merciful Jesus Sanctuary of Ruhango, Rwanda. The researcher started by exploring the Healing Ministry in order to know if it has influence on Psycho-Spiritual wellbeing of the Christians. For that, literature review was presented in line with the research topic as well as its main objective. From the results, Healing Ministry influences strongly the psycho-spiritual well-being of Christians who go in prayer at the Merciful Jesus Sanctuary of Ruhango. Findings also demonstrated that, there is a superpower which is able to heal all kinds of illnesses among Christians. This power also, changes the life of some Christians who visit the Sanctuary at Ruhango. The research confirmed what Christians believed in, that, Jesus, through the Healing Ministry, heals incurable diseases, because He heals the body, the mind, the heart and the soul. He provides solutions to all kinds of problem and he changes positively the life of those who dare to go to Merciful Jesus Sanctuary of Ruhango. Psycho-spiritual therapy, listening, personal prayer, adoration prayer, meditation prayer, forgiveness, workshop or spiritual education, and all kinds of spiritual exercises are important ways through which Jesus heals people and provides solutions to all kind of problems.

1.8 Recommendations

There is a need to value Psycho-spiritual therapy, listening, personal prayer, adoration prayer, meditation prayer, forgiveness, workshop or spiritual education, and all kinds of spiritual exercises are important ways through which Jesus heals people and provides solutions to all kind of problems; People's privacy and dignity should be respected and protected. This is basically for those involved in the prayer and healing ministry; Where Counselling and psychotherapy are needed. These specific treatments, as distinct from pastoral care and listening, should only be provided by accredited

counsellors and therapists who adhere to the codes of ethics and practice of their regulatory organizations and who have professional insurance cover.

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