

## **Please advise me on Reiki. Is it accepted by the Church?**

This question did not come from the question box, but was referred to me by Fr. Zeke from a concerned parishioner. According to Reiki for Dummies, Reiki is a “healing system that channels universal life-force energy.” It sounds intriguing, but the U.S. Bishops have recently issued a statement which concludes: *“Since Reiki therapy is not compatible with either Christian teaching or scientific evidence, it would be inappropriate for Catholic institutions, such as Catholic health care facilities and retreat centers, or persons representing the Church, such as Catholic chaplains, to promote or to provide support for Reiki therapy.”*

Healing by divine grace and healing by physical techniques are two kinds of healing accepted by the Church. We can appeal to the Church to intercede on *“behalf of the sick through the invocation of the name of the Lord Jesus, asking for healing through the power of the Holy Spirit.”* We can also have *“recourse to natural means of healing through the practice of medicine.”*

But Reiki falls short on both counts. It claims to be spiritual, but does not rely on God who bestows His healing power on those He wishes. The Reiki techniques are learned from a human master. Healing is not based on Christian faith, but *“for the Reiki practitioner the healing power is at human disposal.”* It is about learning to channel some life-force, not praying for divine grace. There is also no evidence that Reiki techniques represent a physical technique that can pass as practicing medicine. The Bishops state: *“In terms of caring for one's physical health or the physical health of others, to employ a technique that has no scientific support (or even plausibility) is generally not prudent.”*

The Bishops conclude that submitting to Reiki falls more under the realm of superstition. They state: *“Without justification either from Christian faith or natural science, however, a Catholic who puts his or her trust in Reiki would be operating in the realm of superstition, the no-man's-land that is neither faith nor science.”*

The full text of the bishops' guidelines can be found at: [http://www.usccb.org/dpp/Evaluation\\_Guidelines\\_finaltext\\_2009-03.pdf](http://www.usccb.org/dpp/Evaluation_Guidelines_finaltext_2009-03.pdf), or the summary press release can be found at: <http://www.usccb.org/comm/archives/2009/09-067.shtml>.

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