

**The Ailing Body in the Context of the Orthodox Tradition
(Healing Prayers as Contemporary Ritual Practices)**

Maria Schnitter

(Summary)

The article discusses the question about the attitude of the Orthodox Church to illness as a sign of broken harmony between the human being and its Creator. Tracing the basic interpretations of bodily suffering in the Christian tradition – as a means of joining the passion of the Christ; as an instrument for the salvation of the human soul; as an evil caused by the Satan but made possible by God, the author comes to the conclusion that the attitude of the Christian theology to the sufferings of the body is ambivalent rather than treating it simply as an ‘ultimate evil’. She also traces the tradition of use of healing prayers in the period between the tenth and the twenty-first centuries as an always actual element of the Christian ritual practices. The text of the so called ‘Cyprian’s Prayers’ is analyzed, too. At the same time its place in the postmodern social context is also outlined.

Keywords: illness, Orthodox religion, magic, prayer, Cyprian’s Prayers

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