

## EDITOR'S NOTE

A friend of mine in high school told me when his father was asked what he was giving up for Lent, he'd always say: "Shooting alligators." The point of course being that this father of four, living near Buffalo, New York, was highly unlikely to cross paths with a gator. No shooting required, so his Lenten sacrifice was an easy one.



**BETSY  
TAYLOR**

The older I get, the more I understand Lent need not be about sacrifice, about giving something up. As noted in *Just One Year: A Global Treasury of Prayer and Worship*, edited by Timothy Radcliffe, "Penance and fasting sound grim and world-denying. But in the Catholic liturgy it is called 'this joyful season.' The word 'Lent' just meant 'Spring' until the thirteenth century." The Lenten reflection in *Just One Year* notes that abstaining from things we want can bring us back "to our deepest desires, for peace and justice, for the fullness of life, and ultimately for God." Lent is a time for renewal and rejuvenation as we prepare for the resurrection and new life at Easter, this passage notes.

Renewal. A Lenten focus on renewal is a long way from not shooting alligators. But what an apt word for the moment we're in. This issue of *Health Progress* centers on Care Changes From COVID. We wanted to explore, after two years of the pandemic, what changes in health care may stay, and what may fall away. This issue isn't intended to provide the definitive answers, but serves more as a snapshot. Here are changes we've made; here's what's working, and here's what's not; and here's a little guidance on some changes your health system may be considering.

Change can feel like the younger sibling to bigger, visionary concepts: transformation, sure, but also renewal. We can fear change; be tired of change; get stressed out by change. But what if it's leading to something better in health care? What if we focus on renewing and sustaining people,

processes and systems to better center patients at the core of the care experience? There's such value in systems looking anew at the needs of their care providers, whether it be more analysis to ensure just wages, or a closer look at formation programs to give more opportunities to reflect on and integrate what it means to work as part of a Catholic ministry.

In his mission column for this issue, CHA's Vice President of Sponsorship and Mission Services Brian P. Smith reminds us, "The most basic, foundational piece of our health care ministry is the fact that we strive to reveal the love of God through our care to a broken and frail world that needs to know God is still with us." In 2 Corinthians 4: 16-18, we read: "Therefore, we are not discouraged; rather, although our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to what is seen but to what is unseen; for what is seen is transitory, but what is unseen is eternal."

By returning to the foundational aspects of the Catholic health care ministry, we can remind ourselves that change may come and go, but the eternal truths of our work do not fall away. And renewal may be just what we need during this Lenten season as we turn to celebrate Easter.

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*The staff of Health Progress wishes to thank Les Stock, lead communications designer, for his 33 years with CHA as he retires from the organization. He has designed hundreds of CHA publications, bringing vision, clarity and additional meaning to each issue.*

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