

EDITOR'S NOTE

In times of distress, I hover between Psalm 23 and Psalm 118. Actually, I don't hover, I dwell in them as I do the comfortable old chair on the back porch or the company of a good friend who hears me out until I find my way to the right decision. Someday I'll remember to write down which of those two psalms my kids should choose for my funeral. Thinking about the program for my last rites is ongoing and has to do with my affection for liturgy. What hymns express my faith as it matures? What readings from Scripture plumb the core of my relationship with God?



**MARY ANN
STEINER**

The comfort of Psalm 23 is so beautifully reassuring. Who doesn't want the wise good shepherd leading us to restful waters to revive our drooping spirits? But these days I keep coming back to Psalm 118. It is one of the longer psalms, best known to many of us from some of the lines near its end. My favorites are "This is the day the Lord has made, Let us be glad and rejoice" and "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone." In the many verses that precede those, however, the Psalmist enumerates some of the other days the Lord has made — days marked by loss and humiliation, days when victory and vindication finally won out, days involving enslavement and suffering, or reconciliation and blessing.

The days that the Lord has made for us now are similarly challenging, almost biblically fraught. I try hard to remember it is the day that God has made for us, not the pandemic, or the plummeting economy, or the racial injustice, or the crisis of leadership. God gives us the day and then entrusts us to find the cure, care for the sick, act justly, speak truly, treat each other kindly and walk humbly. (Micah 6:8)

This issue of *Health Progress* is focused on acting justly and caring for people in the coronavirus crisis. Six months ago we would have seen racial disparities and Catholic health care's rise to the call in the pandemic as two separate topics. That

was naïve at best. We are pressed hard to deal with the facts that health care disparities are real and result from systemic racism. The articles in the pages that follow address ethical guidelines for resource allocation during this time, how Medicaid expansion can reduce disparities, what the stress of caring for COVID patients is doing to caregivers, how long-term care facilities are coping, and where to seek the Holy Spirit in the chaos of the moment.

We are always so fortunate to have authors who write with insight, clarity and wisdom about the issues at hand. For the Summer 2020 magazine we truly appreciate the courageous discussions and personal reflections on clinical, ethical, organizational and social consequences of COVID-19 and health disparities. The three illustrators for this issue created stunning artwork to accompany the articles.

For our faithful readers, we want you to know we have made the decision to publish *Health Progress* quarterly, rather than bi-monthly, as we thought it was the best response to adjusted resources and more expedient use of the CHA website. We will keep to a quarterly schedule through the rest of 2020 and all of 2021. As we develop new formats and options, please let us know what works best for you.

In this time of turmoil laced with way too many imperatives, your friends at *Health Progress* encourage you to go with the gentler ones. Be brave, wear your masks and take good care of yourselves and each other.

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