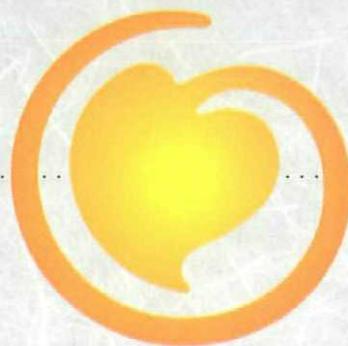


# Prayer

## S E R V I C E



### A HEALING PRESENCE

#### CALL TO PRAYER

- LEADER God, you are present to us in those among us who are in need of healing.
- ALL Conscious that their image reflects our own limitations, we carry them in prayer.
- LEADER Let us pray: O God, you are the hope of all who suffer. Your son Jesus touched the sick, shared the sorrows of those who mourn, and consoled all who longed for healing of any kind. Give us the strength to do the same. Amen.

#### READING SELECTIONS (CHOOSE ANY OR ALL)

Mt 25:35-41

Christ's redemption and saving grace embrace the whole person, especially in his or her illness, suffering, and death. As a witness to its faith, a Catholic healthcare institution will be a community of respect, love and support to patients or residents and their families as they face the reality of death.

(*"Issues in Care for the Dying," Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services, U.S. Catholic Conference, Washington, DC, 1995.*)

Since a Catholic healthcare institution is a community of healing and compassion, the care offered is not limited to the treatment of a disease or bodily ailment but embraces the physical, psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions of the human person.

Pastoral care is an integral part of Catholic health care. It encompasses the full range of spiritual services, including a listening presence; help in dealing with powerlessness, pain, and alienation; and assistance in recognizing and responding to God's will with greater joy and peace.

(*"The Pastoral and Spiritual Responsibility of Catholic Health Care," Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services.*)

#### RESPONSE

There are moments when wellness escapes us, moments when pain and suffering are not dim possibilities but all too agonizing realities. At such moments we must open ourselves to healing.

Much we can do for ourselves; and what we can do we must do—healing, no less than illness, is participatory.

But even when we do all we can do, there is, often, still much left to be done.

And so we turn as well to our healers, seeking their skill to aid in our struggle for wellness.

But even when they do all they can do, there is, often, still much left to be done.

And so we turn to Life, to the vast Power of Being that animates the universe as the ocean animates the wave, seeking to let go of that which blocks our healing.

May those whose lives are gripped in the palm of suffering open even now to the Wonder of Life. May they let go of the hurt and meet the True Self beyond pain, the Uncarved Block that is our joyous Unity with Holiness.

May they discover through pain and torment the strength to live with grace and humor. May they discover through doubt and anguish the strength to live with dignity and holiness.

(*Rabbi Rami M. Shapiro, in Prayers for Healing, Maggie Oman, ed., Conari Press, Berkeley, CA, 1997.*)

- ALL May they discover through suffering and fear the strength to move toward healing. Amen.

#### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

How are you being called to compassionate service?

How are you being called to be a listening presence?

#### CLOSING PRAYER

- ALL Loving God, make us strong enough to enter the vulnerability of the sick and dying. Help us to be a light of strength in their suffering, a hope of redemption, and a consoling presence as we accompany them on their journey. We ask this in your name. Amen.

SUGGESTED MUSIC "Jesus, Heal Us," by David Haas, GIA Publications, Inc., Chicago, 1988; "Peace Is Flowing Like a River," GIA Publications, Inc., Chicago, 1993; "We Remember," by Marty Haugen, GIA Publications, Inc., Chicago, 1980; "You Are Mine," by David Haas, GIA Publications, Inc., Chicago, 1991.

This prayer service focuses on the pastoral and spiritual care aspects of healing the whole person. You may use this service at meetings or on any occasion when you wish to take a moment to reflect on the mission of Jesus. Feel free to adapt the service to suit your own needs.

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