

Prayer

S E R V I C E



LIMITATIONS, HOPES, AND THE COMMON GOOD

CALL TO PRAYER

LEADER O God, we know that you have made us in your image and filled us with every grace and blessing.

ALL We pray today for a deeper understanding of the common good and what it requires of us. Help us to look clearly into the mirror of life and find there gifts and limits, and our responses to both in our personal lives and in the organizations in which we minister. Assist us that we may embrace the gospel paths to which we are called, and with the help of your Holy Spirit, that we may use our resources wisely for the good of all. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

READING I

Every dream must end, even—perhaps especially—that of modern medicine. The dreams we have in our sleep cease when we awaken. They are gone whether we like it or not. Not so those fantasies we have invented in our waking lives. Since they project a better life, a more perfect world, they are not so easy to let go. The dream of modern medicine—that life, death, and illness can be scientifically dominated and pacified—will be one of the most difficult to give up. . . . The dream of modern medicine is no longer viable as it stands. Even if unlimited resources were available, modern medicine cannot deliver on its promises . . . modern societies, beginning with our own, need a “sustainable” medicine . . . economically affordable and equitably available . . . satisfying reasonable health needs and expectations. [I am] after a change in the ideals and hopes of medicine.

Daniel Callahan, *False Hopes: Why America's Quest for Perfect Health Is a Recipe for Failure*, Simon and Schuster, New York City, 1998, pp. 25-26.

RESPONSE Healing God, help us to embrace our limits, act on our beliefs, and work for the common good.

READING II

[H]ope is an attitude about life and living in God's loving care. Hope, rooted in our trust of God's love for us in Christ, gives us strength and confidence; it comforts us with the knowledge that, whatever is happening to us, we are loved by God, through Christ. We seek to comfort those who are ill, whether or not they can be physically cured. We do so by being a sign of hope so that others might live and die in hope. In this we find the Christian vocation that makes our healthcare truly distinctive.

Joseph Bernardin, *A Sign of Hope, A Pastoral Letter on Health Care*, Archdiocese of Chicago and Catholic Health Association, Chicago, 1995, pp. 3-4, 5.

RESPONSE Healing God, help us to embrace our limits, and act as a sign of hope for all in our care.

ALL Till the end of my days, O Lord, I will bless your name, sing your praise, give you thanks, all my day. How great is your love, O Father, that you sent us your Savior Son. His death and his rising will heal us, and draw us all unto you. *Psalms 8*

CLOSING PRAYER

ALL O God, you promise to be with us always, even to the end of time. Be with us now as we seek to work for the common good of all, knowing that there are limits to our medical resources and what we can do. Guide us to see implications for our ministry of healthcare and give us the courage to act. Breathe into us the restlessness and wisdom to make something new, something saving, and something true—that the Spirit may use our gifts and limits for the glory of your name. May we always affirm the mystery of life and hope as our journey continues. Amen.

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This prayer service seeks to explore the common good through the lens of limits of our medical resources. 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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