

# The Way of Love: A Prayer for Compassion and Understanding of Transgender Patients and Their Families

JILL FISK, MATM, and KARLA KEPPEL, MA

CHA DIRECTOR, MISSION SERVICES, and CHA MISSION PROJECT COORDINATOR

“But I shall show you a still more excellent way.” (1 Corinthians 12:31)

## INTRODUCTION

At the heart of Catholic health care lies our call to embrace the sacredness of every person who comes to us for care. We exist to extend a community of healing and compassion as Jesus did, so that all people can be brought to life physically, mentally and spiritually — particularly those who are poor and vulnerable.

As a ministry of the Church, we are committed to understanding the needs of our marginalized and vulnerable patients so that caregivers can serve with empathy and excellence. We recognize the barriers to care that exist for our LGBTQ family. As we continue to serve transgender patients with the compassionate care which is our hallmark, we will share guidance and resources throughout the ministry, highlighting the importance of spiritual care and education. We extend the promise of whole-person care to all patients who walk through our doors. In our actions, love will be our guide.

## REFLECTION

Let us pause and consider the work before us as we gather together. Then, prayerfully consider these words from Pope Francis:

“God is Father and does not deny

any of His children ... And God’s style is closeness, mercy, and tenderness. Not judgment and marginalization. God draws near with love to each of His children, to each and every one of them. His heart is open to each and every one. He is Father. Love does not divide but unites.”<sup>1</sup>

(Pause for silent reflection and/or group discussion.)

Consider:

- How have you experienced God drawing “near with love”?
- What obstacles are there to knowing God’s closeness?
- What, in your experience, causes division?

## CLOSING PRAYER

God of tenderness, God of mercy:

We pray for our patients who feel invisible, who feel eyes avert as they are passed in the hall.

When it is easier to look away, give us eyes like Yours so that we can clearly see their pain and walk tenderly alongside them.

We pray for our patients who live in fear, who have experienced places of care as places of harm.

When we feel ill-equipped, give us the courage to ask for help so that we may work to understand how best to hold those in our care.

We pray for our patients whose

identity is misunderstood or misrepresented.

When we are afraid of getting it wrong, grant us the humility to ask for their forgiveness, so that we can meet them in their full humanity.

We pray for our patients who feel desperately alone amid spiritual crisis.

When we feel powerless to mend one’s troubles or offer comfort, give us hearts like Yours to acknowledge their suffering, ensuring no one is forced to grieve alone.

God who is “longer than the earth in measure,”

God who is “broader than the sea,”<sup>2</sup>

God who is Maker of all persons, God who whispers into silence: Speak Your way of love into the depths of our being.

For who but You can fathom the depths of the intricacies of the human person?

Who can fathom the depths of Your love?

Amen.

## NOTES

1. “Pope Speaks to Italian Psychologist for Book Entitled ‘Fear as a Gift,’” *Vatican News*, Jan. 21, 2023, <https://www.vatican-news.va/en/pope/news/2023-01/pope-speaks-to-italian-psychologist-for-book-fear-as-a-gift.html>.

2. Job 11:9