



Prayer

S E R V I C E

World Day of the Sick, February 11, 2003

Since 1992, Pope John Paul II has celebrated World Day of the Sick on February 11, the day the church celebrates Our Lady of Lourdes. This celebration has had three consistent themes. First, it reminds all to pray intensely and sincerely for those who are sick. Second, it invites Christians to reflect on and respond to human suffering. Finally, it recognizes and honors all who work in health care and serve as caregivers. In 2003 the World Day of the Sick celebration will be held in Washington, DC.

This service, designed for groups in Catholic health care organizations, draws on prayers developed by the National Association of Catholic Chaplains. Prayer cards are available from NACC (www.nacc.org).

Leader On this World Day of the Sick, we gather along with others throughout our nation and the world. We join together to pray for the needs of those who are ill and suffering, to recognize our responsibility to respond to this suffering, and to recommit ourselves to service in the healing ministry of the church.

Prayer for Those Who Are Sick¹

Leader We begin by praying for those who are sick and suffering:

Gracious God, source of hope and healing, source of peace,

Across the world, we light a galaxy of candles.

All For those tossed in the rapids of illness . . . for those lost in the maze of addiction . . . for those locked in broken bodies . . . for those caught in the dark night of despair . . . we pray.

Leader Loosen the grip of pain and soothe their suffering. Throw open a wide way free . . . a path of kindness, compassion, and sweet serenity.

All All over the world, we are praying.

Leader God of hope, healing, and peace, hear our prayers.

Reflection on the Healing Ministry

Leader Confident that God hears our prayer, we turn now to hear God's word to us.

Reader "After crossing the lake, Jesus and the disciples came ashore at Gennesaret and tied up their boat there. No sooner had they stepped out of the boat than people recognized Jesus. The crowds started hurrying about the countryside and brought the sick on stretchers wherever Jesus went. Wherever he appeared—in villages, in towns, or in the countryside—they laid down the sick in the open places, begging him to let them touch just the fringe of his cloak, and all who touched Jesus got well" (Mk 6:53-56).

Leader We remember that the work entrusted to us is part of a long tradition of responding to those in need. Today this service has an institutional presence of Catholic health care providers. Recognizing each one of us is an important part of this ministry, we focus on our shared identity.²

All We are the people of Catholic health care, a ministry of the church continuing Jesus' mission of love and healing today.

Reader As provider, employer, advocate, citizen—bringing together people of diverse faiths and backgrounds—our ministry is an enduring sign of health care rooted in our belief that every person is a treasure; every life a sacred gift; every human being a unity of body, mind, and spirit.

All We work to bring alive the Gospel vision of justice and peace.

Reader We answer God's call to foster healing; act with compassion; and promote wellness for all persons and communities, with special attention to our neighbors who are poor, underserved, and most vulnerable.

All By our service, we strive to transform hurt into hope. Be present with us in days and nights that are long and trying, in times of tragedy and grief. Create in each of us a space of consolation and of peace. Amen.

1. Adapted from Deborah D. Cooper, "Prayers for the Sick," National Association of Catholic Chaplains (www.nacc.org).

2. Taken from "A Shared Statement of Identity for the Catholic Health Ministry," Catholic Health Association, St. Louis, 2001.

JOURNAL OF THE CATHOLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES

www.chausa.org

HEALTH PROGRESS®

Reprinted from *Health Progress*, January-February 2003
Copyright © 2003 by The Catholic Health Association of the United States
