

Affirming Human Dignity

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CALL TO PRAYER

Leader: As those who are engaged in the ministry of health care, we are called to promote and defend human dignity. Let us reflect upon the mystery of the human person and dedicate ourselves again to respecting every person's inherent worth.

Reading I

(From *Genesis 1*)

"Then God said: Let us make human beings in our image, after our likeness. God created humanity in His image; in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them. And God blessed them. God looked at everything He had made, and found it very good. Evening came, and morning followed — the sixth day."

Pause for reflection

Reading II

(Based on Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, no. 19)

The root of human dignity lies in humanity's call to communion with God. From the very circumstance of their origin, people are invited to converse with God. For people would not exist were they not created by God's love and constantly preserved by it; and they live more fully when they acknowledge that love.

Pause for reflection

Reading III

(Based on Declaration on Religious Freedom, no. 12)

The leaven of the Gospel has been about its quiet work in people's minds. They have come more widely to recognize their own dignity as persons, and the conviction has grown stronger that we must respect all persons in society.

Pause for reflection

Reading IV

(From "Rebirth of the Clinic," by Daniel Sulmasy, MD, PhD)

The persons who are most vulnerable, particularly in a health care system, are those whose dignity has already been called into question by society before they ever enter the medical office, clinic, or emergency room. Anyone whose worth has been ascribed to anything other than being a member of the human community is vulnerable.

Pause for reflection

Reading V

(From the "Shared Statement of Identity for the Catholic Health Ministry")

Our ministry is an enduring sign of health care rooted in our belief that every person is a treasure and every life a sacred gift.

Pause for reflection

Responsive reading from Psalm 139

Lord, you have probed me,
you know me;
you know when I sit and stand;

you understand my thoughts
from afar.

Even before a word is on my tongue,
Lord, you know it all.

**We give you thanks, O God,
for we are wonderfully made!**

You formed my inmost being;
you knit me in my mother's womb.
I praise you, so wonderfully you
made me;

wonderful are your works!

**We give you thanks, O God,
for we are wonderfully made!**

When I was being made in secret,
fashioned as in the depths
of the earth.

Your eyes foresaw my actions;
in your book all are written down;
my days were shaped, before one
came to be.

**We give you thanks, O God,
for we are wonderfully made!**

How precious to me are your
designs, O God;

how vast the sum of them!

Were I to count, they would

outnumber the sands;

To finish, I would need eternity.

**We give you thanks, O God,
for we are wonderfully made!**

CLOSING PRAYER

All: O God, give us your gifts so that we may live and work according to your vision for humanity, a vision where all are treated with respect and love because of their great worth in your eyes. May we answer your call to treat all as we ourselves wish to be treated and to promote the healing of all persons, especially those who are most vulnerable.
Amen.