

Sent to Heal, Sent to Serve: Health Care Beyond the Hospital Walls

CARRIE MEYER MCGRATH, MDIV, MAS

DIRECTOR, MISSION SERVICES, THE CATHOLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION, ST. LOUIS

CALL TO PRAYER

Scripture speaks to us of a God who goes out, a God who sends, a God who tears down walls and endlessly pours love over the world. Made in this image and likeness, we are sent to heal, sent to serve and sent to love.

READING 1: Fall of Jericho, *Joshua 6:15-16, 20*

On the seventh day, beginning at daybreak, they marched around the city seven times in the same manner; on that day only did they march around the city seven times. The seventh time around, the priests blew the horns and Joshua said to the people, “Now shout, for the Lord has given you the city. As the horns blew, the people began to shout. When they heard the signal horn, they raised a tremendous shout. The wall collapsed, and the people stormed the city in a frontal attack and took it.

READING 2: Field Hospital, *Pope Francis*

The thing the church needs most today is the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful; it needs nearness, proximity. I see the church as a field hospital after battle. It is useless to ask a seriously injured person if he has high cholesterol and about the level of his blood sugars! You have to heal his wounds. Then we can talk about everything else. Heal the wounds, heal the wounds.

REFLECTION: Fortress or Field Hospital?

Jericho was a fortress. A city with not one, but two, fortified walls protecting it from outsiders. Four stories tall with residences built within them, the walls of Jericho were known for their strength, speaking of security and power and privilege, all built with human hands. Yet the blast of a trumpet, shouts from nomadic raiders

and the power of God felled the walls in an instant.

Have we built ourselves a Jericho? Have we built a fortress of our health systems, witnesses to our own knowledge, skill, power and prestige? High in our medical towers are we able to hear the trumpet blasts and shouts of those who need us? Pope Francis speaks of the church as a field hospital to minister to the wounded with nearness and proximity. As a ministry of the church, we are sent beyond the walls to tend the wounds we find on the margins.

In the company of those who have gone before us, let us pray for the courage and innovation to tear down the walls that keep so many from health care.

LITANY (*Feel free to include your own wisdom figures, founders and foundresses.*)

Please respond, *Pray for us.*

- St. Damien of Molokai, who lived among, cared for and died with the lepers of Hawaii, *pray for us.*
- St. Martin de Porres, who cared for all regardless of race or class, *pray for us.*
- St. Teresa of Calcutta, who tended to the dying poor, *pray for us.*
- St. Elizabeth, who shared her wealth with the sick and suffering, *pray for us.*

CLOSING PRAYER [All]

Loving God, send us as you sent your Son, as you send holy men and women in every age. Inspire and sustain us to tear down the walls that keep health care a privilege of the few and not a right of the many. As Jesus healed in homes, on street corners and in the field, send us to the sick, suffering and brokenhearted wherever we find them. Amen.

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