

# Suffering

LORI ASHMORE-RUPPEL

MISSION PROGRAM AND RESEARCH ASSOCIATE, THE CATHOLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION, ST. LOUIS

**Leader:** As we gather, let us center ourselves in the presence of God and one another.

Suffering is all around. The news continuously reminds us of those in distant lands and in our own neighborhoods who are devastated by hurricanes and floods, sickened by chemical weapons, hurt or lost due to gun violence, starving from famine. How are we called to respond?

*(Pause for reflection)*

**Leader:** Suffering is personal. We all know the pain, discomfort and frustration of a physical illness. We know emotional suffering in its anguish, frustration and grief. We know suffering intimately. How are we called to respond to our own suffering?

*(Pause for reflection)*

**Reader 1:** (from Pope Francis' homily, April 2, 2017, Piazza Martiri, Carpi, Italy)

“Let us not be imprisoned by the temptation to be alone and disheartened, to feel sorry for ourselves, for what happens to us; do not yield to useless and inconclusive logic and fear, resigned to repeat that everything is wrong and nothing is like it used to be. This is the atmosphere of the tomb; the Lord wants to instead, open the way of life, the encounter with Him, trust in Him, the resurrection of the heart.”

*(Pause for reflection)*

**Leader:** As we reflect on our response to the suffering of the world, those we encounter in our ministry, and in our own lives, let us make our intentions known to our God of hope.

**Reader 2:** Let us not be imprisoned by the temptation to be alone but find a community of believers that supports and sympathizes with us in times of suffering, we pray to the Lord.

**Response:** Lord hear our prayer

**Reader 2:** Open our eyes to see the ways we can accompany the suffering with compassion and care as we carry out the healing ministry of Jesus, we pray to the Lord.

**Response:** Lord hear our prayer

**Reader 2:** Give us courage as we act to alleviate the suffering of those in our world in the ways that we are able, we pray to the Lord.

**Response:** Lord hear our prayer

**Reader 2:** Help us know the hope that restores our spirit and invigorates our will to serve in the midst of sorrow and grief, we pray to the Lord.

**Response:** Lord hear our prayer

**Leader:** God of Hope, Christ the suffering servant, when all is lost in the darkness of suffering, you are there. You took all human suffering upon yourself on the cross and showed to us the victory that is the resurrection. We look to you as we serve our ministry and accompany those who suffer, providing a heart that listens and hands that comfort. Lead us not to fear but prayer, hope and action.

*Amen*

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