

February 11, 2014

Call to Prayer

Leader: The World Day of the Sick is celebrated every year on the commemoration of Our Lady of Lourdes, February 11. In his message for this year's feast day, Pope Francis commented on the themes of faith and charity. Focusing on those who are sick, caregivers and volunteers, the Pope said: "We thus find ourselves before the mystery of God's love for us, which gives us hope and courage: hope, because in the plan of God's love even the night of pain yields to the light of Easter, and courage, which enables us to confront every hardship in his company, in union with him." We pray on the occasion of the 22nd World Day of the Sick, mindful of the suffering of those who are sick and of the heroic and compassionate efforts of those who follow Christ in the ministry of healing.

Reflection on Scripture

Reader I: (*Lamentations 3:22-24*)

The favors of the Lord are not exhausted, his mercies are not spent;
They are renewed each morning, so great is his faithfulness.
My portion is the Lord, says my soul; therefore will I hope in him.

Reader II: (*2 Corinthians 1:3-7*)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and God of all encouragement, who encourages us in our every affliction, so that we may be able to encourage those who are in any affliction with the encouragement with which we ourselves are encouraged by God. For as Christ's sufferings overflow to us, so through Christ does our encouragement also overflow. If we are afflicted, it is for your encouragement and salvation; if we are encouraged, it is for your encouragement, which enables you to endure the same sufferings that we suffer. Our hope for you is firm, for we know that as you share in the sufferings, you also share in the encouragement.

All (alternating sides): (*Psalm 91:1-2, 4-6, 10-11*)

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High,
abides under the shadow of the Almighty.

He shall say to the Lord, "You are my refuge and my stronghold,

my God in whom I put my trust.”

He shall cover you with his pinions,
and you shall find refuge under his wings;
his faithfulness shall be a shield and buckler.

*You shall not be afraid of any terror by night,
nor of the arrow that flies by day;
Of the plague that stalks in the darkness,
nor of the sickness that lays waste at mid-day.*

Because you have made the Lord your refuge,
and the Most High your habitation,
There shall no evil happen to you,
neither shall any plague come near your dwelling.

*For he shall give his angels charge over you,
to keep you in all your ways.*

Reflection

Leader: Consider these words from the message of Pope Francis for the 22nd World Day of the Sick:

Reader III: To grow in tender love, and a respectful and sensitive charity, we have a sure Christian model to contemplate: Mary, the Mother of Jesus and our Mother, who is always attentive to the voice of God and the needs and troubles of her children. Mary, impelled by God’s mercy which took flesh within her, selflessly hastened from Galilee to Judea to find and help her kinswoman Elizabeth. She interceded with her Son at the wedding feast of Cana when she saw that there was a shortage of wine. She bore in her heart, throughout the pilgrimage of her life, the words of the elderly Simeon who foretold that a sword would pierce her soul, and with persevering strength she stood at the foot of the cross of Jesus. She knows the way, and for this reason she is the Mother of all of the sick and suffering. To her we can turn with confidence and filial devotion, certain that she will help us, support us and not abandon us. She is the Mother of the crucified and risen Christ: she stands beside our crosses and she accompanies us on the journey towards the resurrection and the fullness of life. Saint John, the disciple who

stood with Mary beneath the cross, brings us to the sources of faith and charity, to the heart of the God who “is love.” He reminds us that we cannot love God if we do not love our brothers and sisters. Those who stand with Mary beneath the cross learn to love as Jesus does.

Prayers of Petition

Leader: O God, source of faith and love, accept the prayers we offer for the sick and for those who care for them. May they see in you the light of health and wholeness shining throughout the world for all eternity.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: Lord, grant your healing grace to all who are sick, injured or disabled, that they may be made whole. Through your loving presence, may all who are lonely, anxious or despondent find comfort and hope. Restore those who are in mental distress to soundness of mind and serenity of spirit.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: Bless physicians, nurses and all others who minister to the suffering, granting them wisdom, skill, compassion, faith and charity.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: Strengthen all who serve in the ministry of Catholic health care with the virtues of faith and charity, that by their service the health of the community may be promoted and your creation glorified.

All: Lord, help us to remain with fortitude beside your cross. We pray through the intercession of Mary, Our Lady of Lourdes. Amen.