

It may be truthfully said that among all professions in Catholic health care, it is the nurse whose call and daily work most closely aligns with that of the founders and foundresses of our ministry. The ancient monasteries, our earliest hospitals, cared for the sick who were brought to them, accompanying the suffering to either healing or eternal life. The influence of and affection between Sister of Mercy Mary Clare Moore and Florence Nightingale is well documented. During the American Civil War, hundreds of Sister-nurses from a dozen orders and multiple communities tended to Southern and Union soldiers with equal charity.

In a letter to President Abraham Lincoln, Surgeon General William A. Hammond lauds the sister-nurses. He writes: *We found in the Sisters of Charity, a corps of faithful, devoted and trained nurses ready to administer to the sick and wounded ... Those whom we have employed cannot compare in efficiency and faithfulness ... The latter are trained to obedience, are of irreproachable moral character and most valuable are their ministrations.*

The steady shoulders of the nurse bear much of the weight of our tradition. From offering a word that brings peace or a listening ear of understanding to the good news of discharge, the nurses in Catholic health care witness daily to the goodness of God. The prophet Isaiah proclaims,

“How beautiful on the mountains
are the feet of those who bring good news,
who proclaim peace,
who bring good tidings,
who proclaim salvation,
who say to Zion,
“Your God reigns!”
(*Isaiah 52:7*)

Let us pray for the nurses who serve in our ministry,

God of healing and hope, you sanctify the call of the nurse as one who offers themselves in the service of others.

Just as you willingly took on the lowliness of human nature and in doing so elevated it, the nurse willingly takes on often thankless and commonplace tasks. In doing so she sanctifies and makes them holy.



Nurses Day 2019

Remain with the nurses of Catholic health care. Strengthen them as they serve with faithful devotion. Be a strength to them that they may be strong for others. Be a comfort to them that they may comfort others, and as their shifts come to an end, be a resting place for them that they may know your love, grace and joy. Amen.