

World Day of the Sick

February 11, 2021

“The commandment of love that Jesus left to his disciples is also kept in our relationship with the sick. A society is all the more human to the degree that it cares effectively for its most frail and suffering members, in a spirit of fraternal love. Let us strive to achieve this goal so that no one will feel alone, excluded, or abandoned.”

Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the 29th World Day of The Sick

Call to Prayer

Leader Beginning with Saint Pope John Paul II, continuing with Pope Benedict and now with Pope Francis, February 11 has been a day of recognition and prayer for the sick and for the ministry of health care, both professional and familial caregivers. This year we cannot escape the ongoing effects of the worldwide coronavirus pandemic, and our prayer is offered for those most impacted by the virus.

This year’s theme from the Gospel of Matthew calls us to remember, “*You have, but one teacher, and you are all brothers*” (Mt 23:8). However, each of us understands God; we are created in the same light. Even as the pandemic separates us, remakes the world around us, our shared humanity continues to bind us in as one family. As the pandemic continues to surge, wane and wear us down, we find steady support in Jesus, who both knows our illnesses and strengthens us to serve. In choosing this theme, Pope Francis calls us to live our faith in word and deed. May our love be genuine, our service sincere and our faith in God’s goodness firm.

Let us use the Pope’s words to reflect on our experience and listen for God’s comfort and call.

Scripture Reflection

Reader “Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.”
(Romans 12:15)

The Holy Father says, “Before the needs of our brothers and sisters, Jesus asks us to stop and listen, to establish a direct and personal relationship with others, to feel empathy and compassion, and to let their suffering become our own as we seek to serve them.”

Leader A burden shared is a burden halved. In this year, whose burdens and illnesses have you shared? What have you shared with others?

Silence

Reader “Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed.” Isaiah 1:17
The Holy Father says, “Sickness always has more than one face: it has the face of all the sick, but also those who feel ignored, excluded and prey to social injustices that deny their fundamental rights. The current pandemic has exacerbated inequalities in our healthcare systems and exposed inefficiencies in the care of the sick.”

Leader What injustices have broken your heart this year? What issues have you encountered in new ways? How is God calling you to be an ally for the oppressed?

Silence

Reader “Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.” Matthew 5:7
The Holy Father says, “The pandemic has also highlighted the dedication and generosity of healthcare personnel, volunteers, support staff, priests, men and women religious... A silent multitude of men and women, they chose not to look the other way but to share the suffering of patients, whom they saw as neighbors and members of our one human family.”

Leader What acts of love and service have moved you this year? Which of your patients, residents, coworkers or community members has shared in the suffering of the sick?

Silence

Closing Prayer

Leader Illness lays bare our human vulnerabilities, which is the exact place God meets us. Let us pray for God's healing presence in all the world's ailments.

For the sick and those impacted by coronavirus,

For those bound by injustice,

For our fragile environment,

For our own hardheartedness,

God of wholeness and hope, heal your people.

Amen.