

WORLD DAY OF THE SICK – Feb. 11, 2016

THEME: “Entrusting Oneself to the Merciful Jesus like Mary: Do whatever he tells you.” (Jn 2:5)

To be recognized on Sunday, Feb. 7, 2016

INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT:

February 11th is World Day of the Sick, an observation introduced by Saint Pope John Paul II in 1992.

We take to heart Jesus’ special attention to the poor and suffering – and see ourselves as His hands, ministering to those who are ill with the same love and compassion.

We recognize all persons who work in health care, and honour them for their great passion and commitment. On World Day of the Sick, let us pray in solidarity with those who are sick and those who serve the sick around the world.

Two Suggested Bulletin Announcements:

Ministry of Care Blessing to mark the World Day of the Sick

All unpaid health care providers and employed personnel who work in health care including: medical and specializations, spiritual care, volunteers, parish nurses, men and women religious in health care ministry, ministry of care volunteers in parishes and health care facilities, family caregivers, medical and health care students, administration support and coordination personnel, therapists, pharmacists, facilities management, maintenance, housekeeping, dietary, are most welcome to come forward to **receive a prayer of blessing during all regular Sunday mass celebrations on Saturday, Feb. 6th / Sunday, Feb. 7th** honouring World Day of the Sick. This blessing is offered for the benefit of highlighting the health care community – paid and non-paid. Bound by common beliefs, we share in the healing ministry of Jesus Christ throughout the diocese.

All unpaid health care providers, and all employed personnel who work in health care, were invited to receive a prayer of blessing during Sunday Mass celebrations Saturday, Feb. 6 and Sunday, Feb. 7, to mark the World Day of the Sick, celebrated Feb. 11, the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. The blessing at the Sunday liturgy is offered to highlight the health care community – both paid and non-paid – and our sharing in the healing ministry of Jesus Christ. The message for the 2016 World Day of the Sick from Pope Francis can be found online:

https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/sick/documents/papa-francesco_20150915_giornata-malato.html

READINGS FOR SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 7TH, 2016:

First Reading: Isaiah 6.1-2a, 3-8 A Vision of God in the Temple

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. ²Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. ³And one called to another and said: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.'
⁴The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke.
⁵And I said: 'Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!' ⁶Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. ⁷The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: 'Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out.'
⁸Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I; send me!'

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 15.1-11 The Resurrection of Christ

Now I should remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, ²through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—unless you have come to believe in vain. ³For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, ⁴and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸Last of all, as to someone untimely born, he appeared also to me. ⁹For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace towards me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them—though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. ¹¹Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe.

Gospel: Luke 5. 1-11 Jesus Calls the First Disciples

Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, ²he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. ³He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat.
⁴When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, 'Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.'
⁵Simon answered, 'Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.'
⁶When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. ⁷So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. ⁸But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, 'Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!' ⁹For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; ¹⁰and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, 'Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.'
¹¹When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

Homily Suggestions:

- The first and second readings can be linked to health care by exploring one of the principles of Catholic Social Teaching:
 - *The human person is sacred. Every human has the dignity of being made in God's image and likeness. Each is a unique self whom God invites into friendship.*
 - *We care for the poor and vulnerable. The common good asks us to respond especially to those in greatest need and help them become active participants in our society.*

- The gospel offers its link to health by:
 - Acknowledging we are all caregivers in some capacity.
 - There is opportunity to also recognize the value of unpaid caregiving.
 - There is opportunity to link a person's vocational call (or simply their call to serve) to knowing "why" they do the work they do... and if one knows and understands "their why" in terms of what Jesus is suggesting, then their "why" will surely be reflected (by their intention and action) in *what* they do and *how* they do their work.

- **Seven principles of Catholic Social Teaching** - Perhaps there is an opportunity to integrate Catholic social thought and principles into the everyday practice of Christian Catholic life at all levels. Perhaps there is opportunity to link one or two of these principles to the sacred work of health care:
 1. The human person is sacred. Every human has the dignity of being made in God's image and likeness. Each is a unique self whom God invites into friendship.
 2. The human person is social. We grow and thrive through relationships with family and friends and through participating in building the human community.
 3. Every person has rights and responsibilities. Every person has a right to life and those things that make life truly human, such as food, clothing, shelter, education, health care, and work. We need to respect the rights of others and assist them in achieving them.
 4. We care for the poor and vulnerable. The common good asks us to respond especially to those in greatest need and help them become active participants in our society.
 5. We care for creation. God calls us to care for Earth, which supports us in life.
 6. Solidarity is our call. We are one human family, whatever our national, social, ethnic, or economic differences. We recognize this in Jesus' command to love our neighbour as ourselves.
 7. Work has dignity. All persons have a right to work.

Invitation to congregation for the Blessing:

The Importance of Health Care and Its Link to the Ministry of Jesus

“Within our Catholic faith tradition, health care is a ministry of the Church, continuing Jesus’ mission of love and healing today.

The ministry of health care brings together people of diverse faiths and backgrounds, who together serve as ‘Good Samaritans’, stopping along the way to show the compassion and love of Jesus.

Those who serve in the ministry of health care are involved in preventative, acute and long-term care, specialized therapeutics, home care, parish nursing, end-of-life care, spiritual care, supportive counselling and the immense service of volunteerism. Still others serve in health care to support, run, maintain, and administer personnel, buildings and equipment, institutional and technological systems. Others are in the community reaching out to the poor, visiting the lonely, and tangibly caring for the needs of the less-abled. And lest we forget - the many unpaid caregivers of their loved ones in their own home are also part of health care.

Ultimately, Catholic health care ministry is an activity of the whole Church – responding to human suffering and caring for the well-being of the whole person.

Together, we build a faith community that is continuing the healing ministry of Jesus.

So, at this time I invite ALL those who work and serve in health care to come to the front....”

The Blessing:

- ***NOTE: There could be an accompanying action or gesture, for instance having the whole group sprinkled with holy water, or blessing their hands.***

Loving Father and giver of all life,
 You are our support and you are always with us.
 Hear our prayers for all support workers who are
 on duty every day, caring for those who are suffering,
 those who are weak and in need of perpetual help.
 Blessed be the hands that have touched life and suffering.
 Blessed be the hands that have embraced the sick with compassion.
 Blessed be the hands that have released anger and fear.
 Blessed be the hands that have cleaned beds and disposed of wastes.
 Blessed be the hands that have reached out and have been received.
 Blessed be the hands that have comforted the dying and held the dead.
 And blessed be these hands to whom we commend all of the sick,
 the suffering and the aged.
 Give strength and courage to our caregivers
 to be instruments of your everlasting love
 for all those who are in need of your protection.
 We ask this in the name of Christ the Healer, your Son and our Lord, who
 lives with you and the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen.

Prayers of the Faithful:

- **NOTE: Below are suggested Prayers of the Faithful. Please consider using some of these....**

Presider: As we gather to honour World Day of the Sick, we turn towards our Holy Father in trust and offer Him the following prayers and petitions:

Lector: Our response is: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For all who hold and teach the Catholic faith: may they ever-more closely unite themselves with Jesus Christ, the High Priest, as they seek to serve those entrusted to their care. We pray to the Lord: **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For the sick and hospitalized: may they feel the healing power of Christ and find comfort and hope in His constant presence. We pray to the Lord: **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For all Catholic healthcare workers: may they be a light to others and a testament to the Word as they live their faith and care for their patients. We pray to the Lord: **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For all students in the healthcare professions: may their studies be motivated by pure desires to be the hands of Christ and to offer healing and hope to those who are ill. We prayer to the Lord: **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For those who do not have adequate access to healthcare: may we respond to their needs with love and compassion and seek creative solutions to bring healing to all. We pray to the Lord: **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For the vulnerable and marginalized in society, including those with mental and physical illness: may they always be treated with dignity and respect as children of God. We pray to the Lord: **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For administrators and government leaders: may they work to enact legislation and policies compatible with the fundamental ethical and social teachings of our Church, defending the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death. We pray to the Lord: **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For hospital chaplains and those who care for the spiritual needs of the sick: may they offer words of wisdom and truth and be a warming presence to all those who are ill. We pray to the Lord: **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For these prayers and for those special intentions held in the silence of our hearts. We pray to the Lord: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Pope Francis' message for 2016 World Day of the Sick – highlights:

In 2016, Pope Francis is entrusting the 24th World Day of the Sick to the “maternal protection” of Mary.

The theme/phrase for this World Day of the Sick is: “Do whatever he tells you.” (Jn 2:5)

What teaching can we draw from this mystery of the wedding feast of Cana for the World Day of the Sick?

1. Trust in Mary, who urges people to believe and do what Christ says. The Pope highlighted the importance of entrusting oneself to Jesus and his mercy just like Mary did and to “do whatever he tells you.”
2. Illness, especially serious illness, “always places human existence in crisis and brings with it questions that dig deep.” While faith in God might be tested and some people might fall into despair or be angered, illness also can deepen faith, the Pope wrote. “Not because faith makes illness, pain or the questions which they raise disappear, but because it offers a key by which we can discover the deepest meaning of what we are experiencing; a key that helps us to see how illness can be the way to draw nearer to Jesus, who walks at our side, weighed down by the cross.”
3. Mary gives people that key because she has experienced this path herself first hand. Jesus comes to those in need, offering his mercy and healing. Mary also provides comfort and “we see reflected the tenderness of God” in her concern for her children. “This same tenderness is present in the lives of all those persons who attend the sick and understand their needs, even the most imperceptible ones, because they look upon them with eyes full of love.”
4. Serving those in need “can be tiring and burdensome, yet we are certain that the Lord will surely turn our human efforts into something divine,” like he did at the wedding feast of Cana, when servants obeyed Jesus, as Mary told them to, and the water turned to wine. “We too can be the hands, arms and hearts, which help God perform his miracles so often hidden. We too, whether healthy or sick, can offer up our toil and sufferings like the water which filled the jars at the wedding feast” and then became the finest wine.

MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER OF THE 24th WORLD DAY OF THE SICK 2016
(Complete text)



**MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR THE 24th
 WORLD DAY OF THE SICK 2016**

Entrusting Oneself to the Merciful Jesus like Mary: "Do whatever he tells you" (Jn 2:5)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The twenty-fourth World Day of the Sick offers me an opportunity to draw particularly close to you, dear friends who are ill, and to those who care for you.

This year, since the Day of the Sick will be solemnly celebrated in the Holy Land, I wish to propose a meditation on the Gospel account of the wedding feast of Cana (Jn 2: 1-11), where Jesus performed his first miracle through the intervention of his Mother. The theme chosen - Entrusting Oneself to the Merciful Jesus like Mary: "Do whatever he tells you" (Jn 2:5) is quite fitting in light of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy. The main Eucharistic celebration of the Day will take place on 11 February 2016, the liturgical memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes, in Nazareth itself, where "the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (Jn 1:14). In Nazareth, Jesus began his salvific mission, applying to himself the words of the Prophet Isaiah, as we are told by the Evangelist Luke: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord" (Lk 4:18-19).

Illness, above all grave illness, always places human existence in crisis and brings with it questions that dig deep. Our first response may at times be one of rebellion: Why has this happened to me? We can feel desperate, thinking that all is lost, that things no longer have meaning...

In these situations, faith in God is on the one hand tested, yet at the same time can reveal all of its positive resources. Not because faith makes illness, pain, or the questions which they raise, disappear, but because it offers a key by which we can discover the deepest meaning of what we are experiencing; a key that helps us to see how illness can be the way to draw nearer to Jesus who walks at our side, weighed down by the Cross. And this key is given to us by Mary, our Mother, who has known this way at first hand.

At the wedding feast of Cana, Mary is the thoughtful woman who sees a serious problem for the spouses: the wine, the symbol of the joy of the feast, has run out. Mary recognizes the difficulty, in some way makes it her own, and acts swiftly and discreetly. She does not simply look on, much less spend time in finding fault, but rather, she turns to Jesus and presents him with the concrete problem: "They have no wine" (Jn 2:3). And when Jesus tells her that it is not yet the time for him to reveal himself (cf. v.

4), she says to the servants: “Do whatever he tells you” (v. 5). Jesus then performs the miracle, turning water into wine, a wine that immediately appears to be the best of the whole celebration. What teaching can we draw from this mystery of the wedding feast of Cana for the World Day of the Sick? The wedding feast of Cana is an image of the Church: at the centre there is Jesus who in his mercy performs a sign; around him are the disciples, the first fruits of the new community; and beside Jesus and the disciples is Mary, the provident and prayerful Mother. Mary partakes of the joy of ordinary people and helps it to increase; she intercedes with her Son on behalf of the spouses and all the invited guests. Nor does Jesus refuse the request of his Mother. How much hope there is in that event for all of us! We have a Mother with benevolent and watchful eyes, like her Son; a heart that is maternal and full of mercy, like him; hands that want to help, like the hands of Jesus who broke bread for those who were hungry, touched the sick and healed them. All this fills us with trust and opens our hearts to the grace and mercy of Christ. Mary’s intercession makes us experience the consolation for which the apostle Paul blesses God: “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 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” (2 Cor 1:3-5). Mary is the “comforted” Mother who comforts her children.

At Cana the distinctive features of Jesus and his mission are clearly seen: he comes to the help of those in difficulty and need. Indeed, in the course of his messianic ministry he would heal many people of illnesses, infirmities and evil spirits, give sight to the blind, make the lame walk, restore health and dignity to lepers, raise the dead, and proclaim the good news to the poor (cf. Lk 7:21-22). Mary’s request at the wedding feast, suggested by the Holy Spirit to her maternal heart, clearly shows not only Jesus’ messianic power but also his mercy.

In Mary’s concern we see reflected the tenderness of God. This same tenderness is present in the lives of all those persons who attend the sick and understand their needs, even the most imperceptible ones, because they look upon them with eyes full of love. How many times has a mother at the bedside of her sick child, or a child caring for an elderly parent, or a grandchild concerned for a grandparent, placed his or her prayer in the hands of Our Lady! For our loved ones who suffer because of illness we ask first for their health. Jesus himself showed the presence of the Kingdom of God specifically through his healings: “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them” (Mt 11:4-5). But love animated by faith makes us ask for them something greater than physical health: we ask for peace, a serenity in life that comes from the heart and is God’s gift, the fruit of the Holy Spirit, a gift which the Father never denies to those who ask him for it with trust.

In the scene of Cana, in addition to Jesus and his Mother, there are the “servants”, whom she tells: “Do whatever he tells you” (Jn 2:5). Naturally, the miracle takes place as the work of Christ; however, he wants to employ human assistance in performing this miracle. He could have made the wine appear directly in the jars. But he wants to rely upon human cooperation, and so he asks the servants to fill them with water. How wonderful and pleasing to God it is to be servants of others! This more than anything else makes us like Jesus, who “did not come to be served but to serve” (Mk 10:45). These unnamed people in the Gospel teach us a great deal. Not only do they obey, but they obey generously: they fill the jars to the brim (cf. Jn 2:7). They trust the Mother and carry out immediately and well what they are asked to do, without complaining, without second thoughts.

On this World Day of the Sick let us ask Jesus in his mercy, through the intercession of Mary, his Mother

and ours, to grant to all of us this same readiness to be serve those in need, and, in particular, our infirm brothers and sisters. At times this service can be tiring and burdensome, yet we are certain that the Lord will surely turn our human efforts into something divine. We too can be hands, arms and hearts which help God to perform his miracles, so often hidden. We too, whether healthy or sick, can offer up our toil and sufferings like the water which filled the jars at the wedding feast of Cana and was turned into the finest wine. By quietly helping those who suffer, as in illness itself, we take our daily cross upon our shoulders and follow the Master (cf. Lk 9:23). Even though the experience of suffering will always remain a mystery, Jesus helps us to reveal its meaning.

If we can learn to obey the words of Mary, who says: “Do whatever he tells you”, Jesus will always change the water of our lives into precious wine. Thus this World Day of the Sick, solemnly celebrated in the Holy Land, will help fulfill the hope which I expressed in the Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy: ‘I trust that this Jubilee year celebrating the mercy of God will foster an encounter with [Judaism and Islam] and with other noble religious traditions; may it open us to even more fervent dialogue so that we might know and understand one another better; may it eliminate every form of closed-mindedness and disrespect, and drive out every form of violence and discrimination’ (Misericordiae Vultus, 23). Every hospital and nursing home can be a visible sign and setting in which to promote the culture of encounter and peace, where the experience of illness and suffering, along with professional and fraternal assistance, helps to overcome every limitation and division.

For this we are set an example by the two Religious Sisters who were canonized last May: Saint Marie-Alphonsine Danil Ghattas and Saint Mary of Jesus Crucified Baouardy, both daughters of the Holy Land. The first was a witness to meekness and unity, who bore clear witness to the importance of being responsible for one another other, living in service to one another. The second, a humble and illiterate woman, was docile to the Holy Spirit and became an instrument of encounter with the Muslim world.

To all those who assist the sick and the suffering I express my confident hope that they will draw inspiration from Mary, the Mother of Mercy. “May the sweetness of her countenance watch over us in this Holy Year, so that all of us may rediscover the joy of God’s tenderness” (ibid., 24), allow it to dwell in our hearts and express it in our actions! Let us entrust to the Virgin Mary our trials and tribulations, together with our joys and consolations. Let us beg her to turn her eyes of mercy towards us, especially in times of pain, and make us worthy of beholding, today and always, the merciful face of her Son Jesus!

With this prayer for all of you, I send my Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 15 September 2015

Memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows

FRANCIS