

REMEMBERING THE ILL and INFIRM AMONG US

Excerpt from a letter of Pope Benedict XVI

The World Day of the Sick will be held on Feb. 11, 2006, the liturgical memorial of the Blessed Virgin of Lourdes.

On that occasion, the Church intends to bow with special solicitude to the suffering, calling the attention of public opinion to the problems connected with mental disturbance, which by now afflicts one-fifth of mankind and constitutes a real and authentic social health care emergency.

I would like here to thank those who work in various ways and at various levels to ensure that the spirit of solidarity does not decline and that people persevere in looking after these brothers and sisters of ours, basing themselves on human and Gospel-based ideals and principles. I thus encourage the efforts of those who work to ensure that all ill people are given access to necessary forms of care and treatment. Unfortunately, in many parts of the world the services for these sick people are lacking, insufficient or in a state of decay.

I would here like to address myself to you, dear brothers and sisters burdened by illness, so as to invite you to offer your condition of suffering, together with Christ, to the Father, certain that every ordeal received with resignation is meritorious and draws the benevolence of God upon the whole of mankind. I express my appreciation to those who help and care for you and I exhort them to strive to ensure that medical, social and pastoral assistance for those in need which respects the dignity specific to every human being is never absent.

Every Christian, according to his specific task and specific responsibility, is called to make his contribution so that the dignity of these brothers and sisters of ours is recognized, respected and promoted. To those who are at the service of the sick, with the help of “Mary Salus Infirmorum,” may you bear witness to the goodness and the paternal solicitude of God. May the Holy Virgin comfort those who are afflicted by illness and support those who, like the Good Samaritan, soothe their corporeal and spiritual wounds!



Let us pause and recall that in our midst dwells the Living God.
O God, You are our God, the God of the living and the dead; the God Who walks with those who are ill and/or infirm as well as those who are well.
Blessed be God forever!

“Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake.”

– Colossians 1:24

It is a mistake to be always turning back to recover the past. The law for Christian living is not backward, but forward. Leave the things that are behind, and reach forward to those that are before, for on each new height to which we attain, there are the appropriate joys that befit the new experience. Don't fret because life's joys are fled. There are more in front. Look up, press forward; the best is yet to be!

- F.B. Meyer - The Joyful Newsletter



**Merciful God, You called Your servants,
especially those with disabilities and illnesses
to show us the face of Jesus.
May Your servants come to love Your Will
with all their hearts
and tirelessly try to fulfill it.
Grant this through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.**



**Let us be lifted up to You, O Lord
Let us not see only ourselves,
but help us to see You in others;
Let us not do only for the sake of doing,
but help us to unselfishly do for others;
Let our thoughts and actions be for those less fortunate than ourselves;
Let us rise above our afflictions
and strive instead to ease the hurt and pain in others;
Let us put as much joy as we can into the heart of others;
Let us strive to lift up this fallen world by lifting up others
. . . lifting them to the good and truth and beauty which is our birthright;
By thus lifting up others in a spirit of love and joy and service,
we will more surely be lifted up ourselves.**

- Fr. John Maronic, OMI

**“I will make up in my own body what is lacking
in the suffering of Christ, for the sake of His body, the Church.”**

- Colossians 1:24

Psalm 102

**O Lord, hear my cry and let my plea come to You.
Hide not Your face from me in the day of my distress.
Incline not Your ear to me;
in the day when I call, answer me.**

**Blessed be the Father of Mercies and the God of All Comfort,
Who consoles us in all our afflictions.**

– 2 Corinthians 1:3–4



A reading from the Gospel of Luke (22: 39–43)

Jesus went out from the Cenacle and made His way as was His custom, to the Mount of Olives while His disciples accompanied Him. On reaching the place, He said to them, “Pray that you may not be put to the test.” He withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, then went down on His knees and prayed in these words:

“Father, if it is Your will, take this cup from Me; yet not My will but Yours be done.” An angel appeared from heaven to strengthen Him.

A reading from the Gospel of Matthew (11: 28–30)

Come to me and I will refresh you.

Jesus said to the crowds: “Come to Me, all you who labor and are burdened and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For My yoke is easy, and My burden light.”

Blessing of the Sick

Brothers and sisters, let us bless the Lord, who went about doing good and healing the sick. Blessed be God now and forever.

The Lord Jesus, who went about doing good works and healing sickness and infirmity of every kind, commanded His disciples to care for the sick, to pray for them, and to lay hands on them. We entrust our sick brothers and sisters to the care of the Lord, asking that He will enable them to bear their pain and suffering in the knowledge that, if they accept their share in the pain of His own passion, they will also share in its power to give comfort and strength. Amen



The cross is the hope of Christians.
The cross is the resurrection of the dead.
The cross is the way of the lost.
The cross is the savior of the sick.
The cross is the staff of the lame.
The cross is the guide of the blind.
The cross is the strength of the weak.
The cross is the doctor of the sick.
The cross is the sign of victory over suffering and death .
The cross is the hope of the hopeless.
The cross is the freedom of the slaves.
The cross is the hope of those who are ill.
The cross is the water of the seeds.
The cross is the consolation of the imprisoned.
The cross is the source of those who are thirsty.
The cross is the cloth of the naked.
We thank you, Father, for the cross.

“He took our sickness away, and carried our diseases for us”

Matthew 8:17

INTERCESSIONS

The Lord Jesus loves our brothers and sisters who are ill.
In trust let us pray to Him that He will comfort them with His grace.

Response: *Lord, give those who are sick the comfort of Your presence.*

Lord Jesus, You came as healer of body and of spirit, in order to cure all our ills.

Response: *Lord, give those who are sick the comfort of Your presence.*

You were a Man of Suffering,

but it was our infirmities that You bore, our sufferings that You endured.

Response: *Lord, give those who are sick the comfort of Your presence.*

You chose to be like us in all things, in order to assure us of Your compassion.

Response: *Lord, give those who are sick the comfort of Your presence.*

You experienced the weakness of the flesh in order to deliver us from evil.

Response: *Lord, give those who are sick the comfort of Your presence.*

**At the foot of the cross Your Mother stood as companion in Your sufferings,
and in Your tender care You gave her to us as our mother.**

Response: *Lord, give those who are sick the comfort of Your presence.*

Look kindly upon all those who care for the sick.

Response: *Lord, give those who are sick the comfort of Your presence.*

Here name those you want to especially remember in prayer.

Let us pray:

**Lord and Father, almighty and eternal God,
by Your blessing You give us strength and support in our frailty:
turn with kindness toward Your servants who are ill
in mind, body or spirit.**

**Free them from all illness and restore them to health if it be Your will,
so that in the sure knowledge of Your goodness
they will gratefully bless Your holy name.**

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.



**Healer of our every ill, Light of each tomorrow,
give us peace beyond our fear and hope beyond our sorrow.**

**You Who know our fears and sadness,
grace us with Your peace and gladness,
Spirit of All Comfort, fill our hearts.**

**In the pain and joy beholding,
how Your grace is still unfolding,
give us all Your vision, God of Love.**

**Give us strength to love each other,
every sister every brother,
Spirit of All Kindness, be our Guide.**

**You Who know each thought and feeling,
teach us all Your way of healing,
Spirit of Compassion, fill each heart.**



**Saints Camillus and John of God,
watch over all who are ill or disabled.**

**Mary, Health of the Sick,
implore Your Divine Son to look with favor
on all who are ill.**

**Saint John Baptist de La Salle
and all you holy Brothers who have gone before us,
help us to see Christ in the faces of our brothers and sisters
who suffer from illness of any kind.**

Live Jesus in our hearts. Forever!