April 2022

-For health care workers-

We pray for health care workers who serve the sick and the elderly, especially in the poorest countries; may they be adequately supported by governments and local communities.

Fr Joe SJ video, 1min here
Pope video, 1min thepopevideo.org

Reflection by Leslie Sholly

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More than two years have gone by since the global Covid-19 pandemic was officially declared. If there is anything most of us have learned during that time it is to appreciate healthcare workers. While those of us who were able left our jobs or worked from home and tried to avoid contagion, they persevered. Day after day they have literally risked their lives to help others. They have worked around the clock and into burnout, often without enough supplies or equipment.

And it’s not only doctors and nurses who have performed their duties heroically, but so many others—orderlies, medical technicians, certified nursing assistants, the folks working in cafeterias and maintenance, and many more—all who have lived the Gospel call to love their neighbors as themselves.

“Greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). According to the World Health Organization, over 115,000 health care workers have died of Covid-19. During the worst of the pandemic in New York City, health care workers exited the hospitals to nightly cheers of appreciation. But time marches on, and enthusiasm fades. As the rest of us go back to business as usual, let us not forget the vital importance of health care workers, not just during pandemics but all the time.

Let us ask God to bless them, and also that He may help us be mindful of ways we and our communities can appreciate and support them and the work that they do.
[Leader] **Daily offering prayer:** O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer You my prayers, works, joys, and sufferings of this day in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world. I offer them for all the intentions of Your Sacred Heart: the salvation of souls, reparation for sin, and the reunion of all Christians. I offer them for the intentions of our bishops and of all Apostles of Prayer, and in particular for those recommended by our Holy Father this month—

*APRIL:* For health care workers. *We pray for health care workers who serve the sick and the elderly, especially in the poorest countries; may they be adequately supported by governments and local communities.*

**Grace:** We pray for the grace to support health care workers well, to recognize and appreciate the vital work they do in supporting those on the margins of society.

**[Reader 1] Scripture:** “As Jesus was entering a village, ten lepers met him. They stood at a distance from him and raised their voice, saying, “Jesus, Master! Have pity on us!” And when he saw them, he said, “Go show yourselves to the priests.”* As they were going they were cleansed. And one of them, realizing he had been healed, returned, glorifying God in a loud voice...Then Jesus said to him, ‘Stand up and go; your faith has saved you.’” (Luke 17:12-15, 19)

**[Reader 2] Quote:** “Dear healthcare professionals, let us always remember that diagnostic, preventive and therapeutic treatments, research, care and rehabilitation are always in the service of the sick person; indeed the noun “person” takes priority over the adjective “sick”. In your work, may you always strive to promote the dignity and life of each person, and reject any compromise in the direction of euthanasia, assisted suicide or suppression of life, even in the case of terminal illness. When confronted with the limitations and even failures of medical science before increasingly problematic clinical cases and bleak diagnoses, you are called to be open to the transcendent dimension of your profession that reveals its ultimate meaning. Let us remember that life is sacred and belongs to God; hence it is inviolable and no one can claim the right to dispose of it freely. Life must be welcomed, protected, respected and served from its beginning to its end: both human reason and faith in God, the author of life, require this. In some cases, conscientious objection becomes a necessary decision if you are to be consistent with your “yes” to life and to the human person. Your professionalism, sustained by Christian charity, will be the best service you can offer for the safeguarding of the truest human right, the right to life. When you can no longer provide a cure, you will still be able to provide care and healing, through gestures and procedures that give comfort and relief to the sick.” (Pope Francis, *Message for the XXVIII World Day of the Sick 2020*).

[Leader] **Reflection questions:**
How have you seen the healing service of health care workers, do specific people or moments come to mind? What are ways you can support health care worker in their mission? *[All: take 1 min in quiet reflection; 2 min to journal; and then share a with the group]*

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