



## The Message of Pope Francis for the 30th World Day of the Sick

"Jesus' invitation to be merciful like the Father - writes the Pope - has particular significance for healthcare workers. I think of all those physicians, nurses, laboratory technicians, the support staff and the caretakers of the sick, as well as the

numerous volunteers who donate their precious time to assist those who suffer". People who have made their service a mission. Because Your hands, which touch the suffering flesh of Christ, can be a sign of the merciful hands of the Father".

The Pontiff recalls "the progress that medical science has made, especially in recent times; new technologies have made it possible to prepare therapies that are of great benefit to the sick; research continues to make a valuable contribution to eliminating old and new pathologies; rehabilitation medicine has greatly expanded its expertise and skills. None of this, however, must make us forget the uniqueness of each patient, his or her dignity and frailties". However, He issues a warning and calls for the patient to always be treated as a person with his own dignity. "None of this, however, must make us forget the uniqueness of each patient, his or her dignity and frailties. Patients are always more important than their diseases, and for this reason, no therapeutic approach can prescind from listening to the patient, his or her history, anxieties and fears. Even when healing is not possible, care can always be given. It is always possible to console, it is always possible to make people sense a closeness that is more interested in the person than in his or her pathology".

The Holy Father reaffirms the importance of Catholic healthcare institutions and their commitment to caring for and treating people. "At a time in which the culture of waste is widespread and life is not always acknowledged as worthy of being welcomed and lived, these structures, like "houses of mercy", can be exemplary in protecting and caring for all life, even the most fragile, from its beginning until its natural end".

Finally, He concludes by recalling the indispensable service of the health care ministry, especially in spiritual assistance to the sick, and the commitment that each of us should have in making ourselves close to those who suffer. Because "the ministry of consolation is a task for every baptized person, mindful of the word of Jesus: "I was sick and you visited me" (*Mt 25:36*)".