

## MESSAGE FOR THE WORLD DAY OF THE SICK 2010

VATICAN CITY, 3 DEC 2009 (VIS) - Made public today was the Pope's Message for the eighteenth World Day of the Sick, which is due to be celebrated in the Vatican Basilica on 11 February 2010, Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes.

Noting how the forthcoming Day coincides with the twenty-fifth anniversary of the foundation of the Pontifical Council for Health Pastoral Care, the Holy Father expresses the hope that this fact "will be the occasion for a more generous apostolic commitment at the service of the sick and of their carers".

"In the mystery of Christ's passion, death and resurrection", writes the Pope, "human suffering finds meaning and fullness of light. ... At the Last Supper the Lord Jesus, before returning to the Father, bent to wash the Apostles' feet in a foretaste of His supreme act of love upon the Cross. With this gesture He invited His disciples to follow His own logic of a love that especially gives itself to the weakest and to those most in need. Following His example all Christians are called to relive, in different contexts, the parable of the Good Samaritan".

Jesus, says the Holy Father, "exhorts us to attend to the bodily and spiritual wounds of so many of our brothers and sisters whom we meet on the roads of the world. He helps us to understand that, with the grace of God accepted and lived in everyday life, the experience of sickness and suffering can become a school of hope".

"At the current historical-cultural time", the Message continues, "there is an increasing need for an attentive and extensive ecclesial presence alongside sick people, as well as a presence in society capable of effectively transmitting evangelical values for the protection of human life in all its phases, from conception until natural end".

The Pope expresses his heartfelt thanks "to the people who daily 'serve the sick and suffering' ensuring that 'that their apostolate of mercy may ever more effectively respond to people's needs'".

In the current Year for Priests, Benedict XVI also addresses the "'ministers of the sick', sign and instrument of Christ's compassion which must reach everyone who suffers". In this context he invites clergy "to show no reserve in offering help and comfort. Time spent alongside the suffering is rich in grace for all other dimensions of pastoral care.

"Finally," he adds in conclusion, "I address you, dear sick people, and I ask you to pray and to offer your suffering for priests, that they may remain faithful to their vocation and that their ministry may be rich in spiritual fruits for the benefit of the entire Church".

MESS/WORLD DAY OF SICK/...

VIS 091203 (460)