

Paus Franciscus tegen ziekenhuispersoneel: ‘Jullie laten het moederlijke gezicht van God zien’

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door Sanne Gerrits

Paus Franciscus sprak vandaag medisch personeel toe in het katholieke Sint-Louisziekenhuis in Bangkok, dat werkt onder het motto: ‘Waar liefde is, daar is God’.

700 Dokters, verpleegkundigen en dienstpersoneel van verschillende zorginstellingen verzamelden zich daar om naar te paus te luisteren. Hieronder enkele uitspraken en foto’s die herinneren aan dit bezoek.

“Het genezingsproces zou moeten worden gezien als een krachtige zalving die de menselijke waardigheid herstelt in iedere situatie. Een blik die waardigheid vergroot en ondersteuning biedt.”

“Jullie werk is het verwelkomen en omarmen van menselijk leven zoals het komt in de spoedafdeling, dat met medelijden, voortgekomen uit liefde en respect voor de waardigheid van iedere mens, behandeld moet worden.”

“Jullie laten ons het moederlijke gezicht van God zien die neerbuigt om zijn kinderen te zalven en op te richten.”

“Dit is niet enkel een zaak van procedures en programma’s, maar heeft te maken met een bereidheid om te omarmen wat iedere nieuwe dag ons brengt.”

Paus Franciscus bezocht zonder publiek 40 zieken en gehandicapten in de hal van het ziekenhuis.

“Ziekte kan er toe leiden dat mensen zich serieuze vragen gaan stellen over leven, dood en lijden. Maar door ons te verenigen met Jezus en zijn lijden, ontdekken we de kracht van zijn nabijheid bij onze breekbaarheid en onze wonden.”

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Tot ziekenhuispersoneel: ‘Jullie laten het moederlijke gezicht van God zien’

Meeting with the medical staff of St. Louis Hospital

Pope Francis

Bangkok, 21 November 2019

Dear Friends,

I am happy to have this opportunity to meet you, the medical, nursing and support staff of St. Louis Hospital and other Catholic hospitals and charitable agencies. I thank the Director for his kind words of introduction. It is a blessing for me to witness at first hand this valuable service that the Church offers to the Thai people, especially to those most in need. With affection, I greet the Sisters of Saint Paul of Chartres and all the other women

religious present today, and I thank them for their quiet and joyful dedication to this apostolate over these many years. You enable us to contemplate the maternal face of God who bends down to anoint and raise up his children: thank you.

I was pleased to hear the Director speak of the principle by which this Hospital operates: *Ubi caritas, Deus ibi est* – where love is, there God is. It is precisely in the exercise of charity that we Christians are called not only to demonstrate that we are missionary disciples, but also to take stock of our own fidelity, and that of our institutions, to the demands of that discipleship. “Truly, I say to you”, says the Lord, “all that you have done to one of these my little brothers, you did it to me” (Mt 25:40). You are missionary disciples in the field of health care, for you open your hearts to “a mystical fraternity, a contemplative fraternity, capable of seeing the sacred grandeur of our neighbour, of finding God in every human being, of tolerating the nuisances of life in common by clinging to the love of God, of opening the heart to divine love and seeking the happiness of others, just as their heavenly Father does”(Evangelii Gaudium, 92).

Seen in this way, you carry out one of the greatest works of mercy, for your commitment to health care goes far beyond the simple and praiseworthy practice of medicine. This is not only a matter of procedures and programs; rather, it has to do with our readiness to embrace whatever each new day sets before us. It is about welcoming and embracing human life as it arrives at the Hospital’s emergency room, needing to be treated with the merciful care born of love and respect for the dignity of each human person. The healing process should rightly be seen as a powerful anointing capable of restoring human dignity in every situation, a gaze that grants dignity and provides support.

All of you, as members of this hospital community, are missionary disciples whenever you look at your patients and you learn to call them by name. I know that at times your service can prove burdensome and tiring; you work under extreme circumstances, and for this reason you need to be accompanied and supported in your work. This speaks to us of the need for a health care ministry in which not only patients but every member of this community can feel cared for and supported in his or her mission. Please know that your efforts and the work of the many institutions that you represent are a living testimony of the care and concern that all of us are called to show to everyone, especially the elderly, the young and those most vulnerable.

This year St. Louis Hospital celebrates the 120th anniversary of its foundation. How many people have received relief from their pain, comfort in their sorrow and companionship in their loneliness! As I give thanks to God for the gift of your presence over these years, I ask you to ensure that this and similar apostolates may increasingly become a sign and emblem of a Church on the move, which, in carrying out her mission, finds the courage to bring Christ’s healing love to all those who suffer.

At the end of this meeting, I will be visiting the sick and the disabled, as a way of accompanying them, however briefly, in their pain.

Each of us knows how illness brings with it questions that dig deep. Our first reaction may be to rebel and even experience moments of bewilderment and desolation. We cry out in pain, and rightly so: Jesus himself shared in that suffering and made it his own. With prayer, we too want to join in his own cry of pain.

By uniting ourselves to Jesus in his passion, we discover the power of his closeness to our frailty and our wounds. We are invited to cling to him and to his sacrifice. If at times we feel deeply “the bread of adversity and the water of affliction”, let us also pray that we can find, in an outstretched hand, the help needed to discover the comfort that comes from “the Lord who does not hide himself” (cf. Is 30:20), but remains ever close to us and accompanies us at every moment.

Let us place this meeting and our lives under the protective mantle of Mary. May she turn her eyes of mercy

toward you, especially at times of pain, illness and vulnerability. May she obtain for you the grace of encountering her Son in the wounded flesh of all those whom you serve.

I bless all of you and your families. And I ask you, please, not to forget to pray for me.

Thank you!

Voor niets hebt gij ontvangen, voor niets moet gij geven

“You received without payment; give without payment” (Mt 10:8)

Message of the Holy Father for 27th World Day of the Sick

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

“You received without payment; give without payment” (Mt 10:8). These are the words spoken by Jesus when sending forth his apostles to spread the Gospel, so that his Kingdom might grow through acts of gratuitous love.

On the XXVII World Day of the Sick, to be solemnly celebrated on 11 February 2019 in Calcutta, India, the Church – as a Mother to all her children, especially the infirm – reminds us that generous gestures like that of the Good Samaritan are the most credible means of evangelization. Caring for the sick requires professionalism, tenderness, straightforward and simple gestures freely given, like a caress that makes others feel loved.

Life is a gift from God. Saint Paul asks: “What do you have that you did not receive?” (1 Cor 4:7). Precisely because it is a gift, human life cannot be reduced to a personal possession or private property, especially in the light of medical and biotechnological advances that could tempt us to manipulate the “tree of life” (cf. Gen 3:24).

Amid today’s culture of waste and indifference, I would point out that “gift” is the category best suited to challenging today’s individualism and social fragmentation, while at the same time promoting new relationships and means of cooperation between peoples and cultures. Dialogue – the premise of gift – creates possibilities for human growth and development capable of breaking through established ways of exercising power in society. “Gift” means more than simply giving presents: it involves the giving of oneself, and not simply a transfer of property or objects. “Gift” differs from gift-giving because it entails the free gift of self and the desire to build a relationship. It is the acknowledgement of others, which is the basis of society. “Gift” is a reflection of God’s love, which culminates in the incarnation of the Son and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Each of us is poor, needy and destitute. When we are born, we require the care of our parents to survive, and at every stage of life we remain in some way dependent on the help of others. We will always be conscious of our limitations, as “creatures”, before other individuals and situations. A frank acknowledgement of this truth keeps us humble and spurs us to practice solidarity as an essential virtue in life.

Such an acknowledgement leads us to act responsibly to promote a good that is both personal and communal. Only if we see ourselves, not as a world apart, but in a fraternal relationship with others, can we develop a social practice of solidarity aimed at the common good. We should not be afraid to regard ourselves as needy or reliant on others, because individually and by our own efforts we cannot overcome our limitations. So we should not fear, then, to acknowledge those limitations, for God himself, in Jesus, has humbly stooped down to us

(cf. *Phil* 2:8) and continues to do so; in our poverty, he comes to our aid and grants us gifts beyond our imagining.

In light of the solemn celebration in India, I would like to recall, with joy and admiration, the figure of Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta – a model of charity who made visible God’s love for the poor and sick. As I noted at her canonization, “Mother Teresa, in all aspects of her life, was a generous dispenser of divine mercy, making herself available for everyone through her welcome and defence of human life, of those unborn and those abandoned and discarded... She bowed down before those who were spent, left to die on the side of the road, seeing in them their God-given dignity; she made her voice heard before the powers of this world, so that they might recognize their guilt for the crime – the crimes! – of poverty they created. For Mother Teresa, mercy was the ‘salt’ which gave flavour to her work; it was the ‘light’ that shone in the darkness of the many who no longer had tears to shed for their poverty and suffering. Her mission to the urban and existential peripheries remains for us today an eloquent witness to God’s closeness to the poorest of the poor” (*Homily*, 4 September 2016).

Saint Mother Teresa helps us understand that our only criterion of action must be selfless love for every human being, without distinction of language, culture, ethnicity or religion. Her example continues to guide us by opening up horizons of joy and hope for all those in need of understanding and tender love, and especially for those who suffer.

Generosity inspires and sustains the work of the many volunteers who are so important in health care and who eloquently embody the spirituality of the Good Samaritan. I express my gratitude and offer my encouragement to all those associations of volunteers committed to the transport and assistance of patients, and all those that organize the donation of blood, tissues and organs. One particular area in which your presence expresses the Church’s care and concern is that of advocacy for the rights of the sick, especially those affected by pathologies requiring special assistance. I would also mention the many efforts made to raise awareness and encourage prevention. Your volunteer work in medical facilities and in homes, which ranges from providing health care to offering spiritual support, is of primary importance. Countless persons who are ill, alone, elderly or frail in mind or body benefit from these services. I urge you to continue to be a sign of the Church’s presence in a secularized world. A volunteer is a good friend with whom one can share personal thoughts and emotions; by their patient listening, volunteers make it possible for the sick to pass from being passive recipients of care to being active participants in a relationship that can restore hope and inspire openness to further treatment. Volunteer work passes on values, behaviours and ways of living born of a deep desire to be generous. It is also a means of making health care more humane.

A spirit of generosity ought especially to inspire Catholic healthcare institutions, whether in the more developed or the poorer areas of our world, since they carry out their activity in the light of the Gospel. Catholic facilities are called to give an example of self-giving, generosity and solidarity in response to the mentality of profit at any price, of giving for the sake of getting, and of exploitation over concern for people.

I urge everyone, at every level, to promote the culture of generosity and of gift, which is indispensable for overcoming the culture of profit and waste. Catholic healthcare institutions must not fall into the trap of simply running a business; they must be concerned with personal care more than profit. We know that health is relational, dependent on interaction with others, and requiring trust, friendship and solidarity. It is a treasure that can be enjoyed fully only when it is shared. The joy of generous giving is a barometer of the health of a Christian.

I entrust all of you to Mary, *Salus Infirmorum*. May she help us to share the gifts we have received in the spirit of dialogue and mutual acceptance, to live as brothers and sisters attentive to each other’s needs, to give from a generous heart, and to learn the joy of selfless service to others. With great affection, I assure you of my



closeness in prayer, and to all I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing.

Vatican City, 25 November 2018

Solemnity of our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

FRANCIS