



MaterCare International message for the 27th World Day of the Sick

Christian charity is not only an individual act of kindness, it is an integral part of actively living one's faith through acts of mercy. [In a recent article in Vatican News](#), "Pope Francis urges believers to promote a culture of generosity, noting that the joy of generous giving is a barometer of the health of a Christian."

This message is not new, as many pastors have preached on the nature of discipleship and its interwoven connection to sacrifice, where Christians are urged to give of their time, their talent and their treasure. This is perhaps never more important than when we talk about our ministry to the sick who are in such desperate need of our charity, our care and our solidarity.

As believers, we find in St Paul and the Church Fathers an encouragement to think of the body of the Church in realist terms, to acknowledge that every parishioner that came before and after us is one with us in the eternal Christ. If one of us is sick or grieving, we all are suffering, and all called to give support. The one Holy Spirit rests within each of us, forming us as one body in Christ with whom the Spirit is one. This is made manifest in our charity toward one another and our commitment to the poor, as exemplified in St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta. "In all aspects of her life", Pope Francis said, "she 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".

In an article in America magazine, the Holy Father went on to say;

"The thing the church needs most today is the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful; it needs nearness, proximity. I see the church as a field hospital after battle. It is useless to ask a seriously injured person if he has high cholesterol and about the level of his blood sugars! You have to heal his wounds. Then we can talk about everything else. Heal the wounds, heal the wounds. ... And you have to start from the ground up."

(From ["A Big Heart Open to God."](#) America magazine Sept. 19, 2013)

MaterCare International's 30-bed maternity hospital in Isiolo, Kenya is our way of participating in this divine mercy and healing the wounds of mothers who have been neglected by our society. Our [Project Isiolo](#) provides a much needed hospital for high risk mothers. The centre is fully equipped and staffed to provide Level 1 obstetrical services. The project also provides emergency transport and communication. The roads in the region are difficult to travel and require a fully equipped 4 X 4 ambulance to get mothers who require life saving services. Satellite phones and radios will link up villages to nursing stations and to the maternity hospital.

This February 11th, 2019, as we reflect on the World Day of the Sick, let us all be reminded of the centrality of practicing works of mercy to the call of discipleship and seek out ways in which we can give of ourselves to those weakest among us.

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