

James's Street Parish

01-4531143 - Working with Francis Street and Meath Street Parishes



Sixth Sunday Ordinary Time – 11 February 2024

MESSAGE OF POPE FRANCIS FOR WORLD DAY OF THE SICK



Thousands “It is not good that man should be alone” (cf. Gen 2:18). From the beginning, God, who is love, created us for communion and endowed us with an innate capacity to enter into relationship with others. Our lives, reflecting in the image of the Trinity, are meant to attain fulfilment through a network of relationships, friendships and love, both given and received. We were created to be

together, not alone. Precisely because this project of communion is so deeply rooted in the human heart, we see the experience of abandonment and solitude as something frightening, painful and even inhuman. This is all the more the case at times of vulnerability, uncertainty and insecurity, caused often by the onset of a serious illness. In this regard, I think of all those who found themselves terribly alone during the Covid-19 pandemic: the patients who could not receive visitors, but also the many nurses, physicians and support personnel overwhelmed by work and enclosed in isolation wards. Naturally, we cannot fail to recall all those persons who had to face the hour of their death alone, assisted by healthcare personnel, but far from their own families. I share too in the pain, suffering and isolation felt by those who, because of war and its tragic consequences, are left without support and assistance. War is the most terrible of social diseases, and it takes its greatest toll on those who are most vulnerable. At the same time, it needs to be said that even in countries that enjoy peace and greater resources, old age and sickness are frequently experienced in solitude and, at times, even in abandonment. This grim reality is mainly a consequence of the culture of individualism that exalts productivity at all costs, cultivates the myth of efficiency, and proves indifferent, even callous, when individuals no longer have the strength needed to keep pace. It then becomes a throwaway culture, in which “persons are no longer seen as a paramount value to be cared for and respected, especially when they are poor or disabled, ‘not yet useful’ - like the unborn, or ‘no longer needed’ - like the elderly” (Fratelli Tutti, 18). Sadly, this way of thinking also guides certain political decisions that are not focused on the dignity of the human person and his or her needs, and do not always promote the strategies and resources needed to ensure that every human being enjoys the fundamental right to health and access to healthcare. The abandonment of the vulnerable and their isolation is favoured also by the reduction of healthcare merely to a provision of services, without these being accompanied by a “therapeutic covenant” between physicians, patients and family members. We do well to listen once more to the words of the Bible: “It is not good for man to be alone!” God spoke those words at the beginning of creation and thus revealed to us the profound meaning of his project for humanity, but at the same time, the mortal wound of sin, which creeps in by generating suspicions, fractures, divisions and consequently isolation. Sin attacks persons and all their relationships: with God, with themselves, with others, with creation. Such isolation causes us to miss the meaning of our lives; it takes away the joy of love and makes us experience an oppressive sense of being alone at all the crucial passages of life. Brothers and sisters, the first form of care needed in any illness is compassionate and loving closeness. To care for the sick thus means above all to care for their relationships, all of them: with God, with others - family members, friends, healthcare workers - , with creation and with themselves. Can this be done? Yes, it can be done and all of us are called to ensure that it happens. Let us look to the icon of the Good Samaritan (cf. Lk 10:25-37), to his ability to slow down and draw near to another person, to the tender love with which he cares for the wounds of a suffering brother. Let us remember this central truth in life: we came into the world because someone welcomed us; we were made for love; and we are called to communion and fraternity. This aspect of our lives is what sustains us, above all at times of illness and vulnerability. It is also the first therapy that we must all adopt in order to heal the diseases of the society in which we live. To those of you who experience illness, whether temporary or chronic, I would say this: Do not be ashamed of your longing for closeness and

tenderness! Do not conceal it, and never think that you are a burden on others. The condition of the sick urges all of us to step back from the hectic pace of our lives in order to rediscover ourselves. At this time of epochal change, we Christians in particular are called to adopt the compassion-filled gaze of Jesus. Let us care for those who suffer and are alone, perhaps marginalized and cast aside. With the love for one another that Christ the Lord bestows on us in prayer, especially in the Eucharist, let us tend the wounds of solitude and isolation. In this way, we will cooperate in combating the culture of individualism, indifference and waste, and enable the growth of a culture of tenderness and compassion. The sick, the vulnerable and the poor are at the heart of the Church; they must also be at the heart of our human concern and pastoral attention. May we never forget this! And let us commend ourselves to Mary Most Holy, Health of the Sick, that she may intercede for us and help us to be artisans of closeness and fraternal relationships.



Ash Wednesday 14 Feb

Mass with distribution of Ashes will be celebrated in James's Street, Meath Street and Francis Street at 10am.



Survivors of Abuse

This year's Worldwide Day of Prayer for Survivors and Victims of Sexual Abuse will take place on February 16, the first Friday of Lent. The Day of Prayer is an initiative of Pope Francis. Candles will be lit in churches and diocesan cathedrals to mark the day.



Towards Peace

<https://towardspeace.ie/>

SIXTH SUNDAY— ORDINARY TIME

Penitential Rite

As we begin our celebration,
let us remember the inclusive love of God.

For our lack of compassion and welcome.
Lord have mercy

For our willingness to exclude those who are different.
Christ have mercy

For our failure to see you in the poor and
marginalised. Lord have mercy

May our great and gracious Lord, who has conquered
selfishness, have mercy on us, forgive us our sin and
bring us to life everlasting. Amen

Leviticus 13: 1-2,44-46

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, 'If a swelling or scab or shiny spot appears on a man's skin, a case of leprosy of the skin is to be suspected. The man must be taken to Aaron, the priest, or to one of the priests who are his sons. 'The man is leprous: he is unclean. The priest must declare him unclean; he is suffering from leprosy of the head. A man infected with leprosy must wear his clothing torn and his hair disordered; he must shield his upper lip and cry, "Unclean, unclean." As long as the disease lasts he must be unclean; and therefore he must live apart; he must live outside the camp.'

1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1

Whatever you eat, whatever you drink, whatever you do at all, do it for the glory of God. Never do anything offensive to anyone - to Jews or Greeks or to the Church of God; just as I try to be helpful to everyone at all times, not anxious for my own advantage but for the advantage of everybody else, so that they may be saved.

Alleluia, alleluia,
A great prophet has appeared among us; God has visited his people. Alleluia!

Mark 1:40-45

A leper came to Jesus and pleaded on his knees: 'If you want to' he said 'you can cure me.' Feeling sorry for him, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him. 'Of course I want to!' he said. 'Be cured!' And the leprosy left him at once and he was cured. Jesus immediately sent him away and sternly ordered him, 'Mind you say nothing to anyone, but go and show yourself to the priest, and make the offering for your recovery.' The man went away, but then started talking about it freely and telling the story everywhere, so that Jesus could no longer go openly into any town, but had to stay outside in places where nobody lived. Even so, people from all around would

come to him.

Prayer of the Faithful

God our Father and Mother, you are present to us in all circumstances. We praise you and thank you.
Lord hear us

Through your Son Jesus you have reached out to us and touched our hearts with your compassion and love. We praise you and thank you. Lord hear us

We call to mind all those who have died, and all who mourn for them. May we be inspired by the memory of those who have gone before us to live more faithfully your Word. Lord hear us

As Jesus was not afraid to reach out and touch the man with leprosy, so may we reach out to all who are excluded in our society and in our own community.
Lord hear us

We pray for an end to violence around the world. Teach us Lord, to accept diversity and to be enriched by it. Lord hear us

In silence we call to mind those who need our prayer and support.....Lord hear us



Reflection

"Our hunger to belong is the longing to find a bridge across the distance from isolation to intimacy. Every one longs for intimacy and dreams of a nest of belonging in which one is embraced, seen, and loved. Something within each of us cries out for belonging. We can have all the world has to offer in terms of status, achievement, and possessions. Yet without a sense of belonging it all seems empty and pointless. The hunger to belong is at the heart of our nature. Cut off from others, we atrophy and turn in on ourselves. The sense of belonging is the natural balance of our lives. Mostly, we do not need to make an issue of belonging. When we belong, we take it for granted. There is some innocent childlike side to the human heart that is always deeply hurt when we are excluded. Belonging suggests warmth, understanding, and embrace. No one was created for isolation. When we become isolated, we are prone to being damaged; our minds lose their flexibility and natural kindness; we become vulnerable to fear and negativity. The sense of belonging keeps you in balance amidst the inner and outer immensities. The ancient and eternal values of human life—truth, unity, goodness, justice, beauty, and love are all statements of true belonging; they are also the secret intention and dream of human longing."

John O'Donohue