

Visit the Sick

"For I was sick and you cared for me." (Matthew 25: 36)



Most of us have had our share of illnesses and injuries. Fortunately, we recovered fully with support from family, friends and neighbors. But within almost every community, there are less fortunate people who are isolated by illness, injury or old age. Think of how much it would mean to them if we reached out and offered them our helping hands. In fact, "supplying companionship and housekeeping for the sick, elderly, and homebound, and accommodating the needs of the physically and mentally disabled are principal avenues of serving the sick." (*The HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism*) Wealthy nations have all manner of medical facilities and medicines to treat all sorts of ailments, as well as advanced research facilities devoted to conquering dreaded diseases. But imagine living in remote, impoverished areas in developing countries with severely limited health-care facilities. Reaching out across the globe to helpless people devastated by poverty and sickness exemplifies Catholic social justice at its best. Think of what our charity could do for places such as sub-Saharan

We are all sick whenever we sin, and this sickness is far more dangerous than any physical ailment could ever be. Visiting the sick is not merely about going to hospitals or visiting people on their sick bed. It is about being there for anyone tempted to sin or vulnerable to the lies of this society. The devil's virus of perdition is strong and we all need help to fight it, first through prayer and faith but also through supporting and guiding each other. Those who visit hospitals while ignoring spiritual illness in themselves or others are making a mockery of what truly makes us healthy. Likewise, any hospital or clinic that pretends to cure physical ills while inflicting spiritual ones is nothing but a vehicle of the devil!

As God's hands on Earth, we can help serve the sick.

Here are some suggestions:

- Regularly visit sick or elderly family members and friends confined to nursing homes.
- Volunteer to drive patients to treatment facilities and doctors appointments.
- Become a hospital volunteer, bringing magazines and books to patients and reading to hospitalized children.
- If a schoolmate is ill at home or in the hospital, organize a class "get-well-soon" project or card.
- Offer to sit with homebound patients to provide primary care givers with time to themselves.
- Cook and deliver meals to the sick, elderly and homebound.
- Pray with the sick and elderly, offer consolation, be a compassionate listener.
- Contribute money and supplies, if needed, to nonprofit local health-care facilities that care for the terminally ill.
- Support overseas missions that staff and provide health-care facilities in developing nations.
- Set with a homebound person to give the regular care giver a break.
- Help prepare for Masses at the Nursing Homes