

**CATHOLIC HEALTHCARE COMMISSION
WORLD DAY OF THE SICK PRAYER LEAFLET 2010**

THEME: *Be still*

Opening Song or Music

Choose any of the following:

Be Still My Soul;
Be Still and Know that I am God;
Only in God.

Introduction

At the moment our country is in the midst of a storm, we are being battered by the winds of recession, job losses, repossession of homes and the many cutbacks which affect many of our services including the health services. The most vulnerable people in our society are being affected especially the sick, where do we turn in this storm? Where do we find stillness and calm? Only in God can we gain the strength to go through the storm and find hope and trust that all will be well.

Gospel: Mark 4: 35-40

On that same day when evening had come, Jesus said to them, "Let's go across to the other side." So they left the crowd and took him away in the boat he had been sitting in, and other boats set out with him. Then a storm gathered and the wind began to blow. The waves spilled over into the boat so that it was already filled with water. And Jesus was in the stern, asleep on the cushion.

They woke him up and said to him, "Master, don't you care if we sink?" As Jesus awoke, he rebuked the wind and ordered the sea, "Quiet now, be still." The wind dropped and there was a great calm. Then Jesus said to them, "Why are you so frightened? Do you still have no faith?"

But they were terrified and they said to one another, "Who can this be? Even the wind and the sea obey him.

Suggested resources to aid reflection

A small boat or picture of a boat sailing on the sea, small cushion, blue and white material, large candle and a number of small candles or tealights

Arrange the material so that it looks like the ocean with waves. Place the boat or picture in the centre of the material. Place the cushion beside the boat or picture. Have some background music playing during the reflection.

Reflection

Look at the centrepiece and reflect on the boat/picture. Imagine you are experiencing very rough crossing of the Irish Sea. The boat is rocking to and fro. The waves are very high and they come on to the deck of the boat.

Imagine the feeling of anxiety as the storm gets stronger and the waves higher. You happen to go near the Skipper's quarters and notice him resting his head on a cushion. Your anxiety rises to fear. You fear that the Skipper is not in charge of the boat, that he is slipping up on his responsibilities. You are afraid that all on board might drown, that you might drown.

Then you notice how the Skipper has delegated all the important jobs to the crew. You hear the directions that the Skipper is giving to the crew. You see the work the crew is doing and now you feel the fear leaving you. You feel the anxiety leaving you.

You feel a trust begin to form in you and you begin to believe that you will get across the Irish Sea safely.

When we are ill in mind or body we can have these fears of 'Who is in charge?' 'Do they know what they are doing'?

All the staff and care givers involved in your recovery or care have been trained and directed to do what is best for you right now.

Breathe in the trust and breathe out the anxiety. Allow the trust to become your source of relief.

Now turn to God the supreme Caregiver. Tell God how you feel right now. Ask God for the courage and strength to go through your illness of mind or body knowing that Jesus has been on that journey and is right beside you every step of the way.

Prayer

The disciples cried out in panic
When their boat was almost sinking.
Aroused from your slumber
You calmed the storm,
And all was peace again.

Lord, I cry out to you, too,
To arouse you from your slumber!
Lest the waves overwhelm me,
And it's all too much to bear.
One minute I feel fine,
The next I'm struggling to put on a smile.

Lord, calm my storm within,
Let me know your gentle peace
Like the calm on a summer's day.
Amen.

Intercessory Prayers

Response: *God who calmed the wind and sea be with us.*

Lord, calm our hearts, when the storm of our feelings of fear and desolation threaten to overwhelm us.

Help us to trust when hope is simply a word and the way ahead is dark.

Bring us to a safe haven when we feel adrift and lonely.

Support all who work to help those who suffer in mind, body or spirit.

May all who suffer illness be brought to a safe harbour of love and trust.

Abyss

My life is halfway down an abyss.
A deep immeasurable space, a gulf, a cavity, a vast chasm.
My life is not how I planned it to be, is not how I want it to be,
Is not how I pray for it to be.
In the darkness of the pit I see a small light of hope.
Is it possible for me to climb to such heights?
To rebuild the bridges? To find my salvation?
The song in my heart is so quiet, is so dark, is so fearful.
I dare not stay in this abyss.
Though deep and vast, I am only halfway down,
Thus I am already halfway up?
Let such words fall onto my heart
And raise me from this depth.

Hope Through Heartsongs – Mattie J.T. Stepanek.

Closing Prayer

Lord. I come now before you in the weakness that has overcome me,
With the feelings that I cannot share and try to hide, with the emptiness
that sometimes grips me, and with the physical and mental pain that so
often preoccupies me.

But I also come in faith and trust, in humility and reverence,
And I ask to be relieved and healed.

Lord, you took human weakness on yourself,
When you lived, suffered and died for our sake.
By rising from the dead you showed your victory
over all human weakness;
Over all the negatives, that threaten to break us,
and over death itself.

Because of this our trust in you is deepened.
You can overcome the negative feelings we experience.

Now I come before you, knowing that you love me just as I am,
But knowing too that you will be my happiness and that you can bring this about,
In ways that I will not be able to understand.

Help me this day not to be overwhelmed by illness, by pain or by the problems that beset me.

I ask this not just for myself but for the sake of all those whose lives I touch. Amen.

Fr. Brian McNamara, SJ.

Blessing

The room can be darkened and a large central candle lit. If appropriate, during the recitation of the blessing each person may be given a small night light.

**There is a quiet light that shines in every heart
Though it is always secretly there,
It draws no attention to itself.**

**It is what illuminates our minds to see beauty,
Our desire to seek possibility
And our hearts to love life....**

**This shy inner light is what enables us
To recognise and receive
Our very presence here as blessing**

John O'Donohoe

Closing Hymn:

Choose a suitable hymn such as You Raise Me Up;

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The Catholic Healthcare Commission

The Catholic Healthcare Commission represents the Irish Bishops' Conference and the Conference of Religious of Ireland.

The purpose of the Catholic Healthcare Commission (CHC) is to represent the Catholic understanding of the ministry of healthcare as an essential component of the Healing mission of Christ.

The CHC works to respect life and to promote healthcare for all in a spirit
Of Christian love and compassion, respecting the dignity and rights of every person.

*The message of Pope Benedict XVI for the Eighteenth World Day of the Sick
Is available on www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedictXVI/messages/sick/documents*

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