



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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World Day of the Sick a tribute to health care workers

As the pandemic enters its third year, the World Day of the Sick this Friday will pay tribute to the valuable work that Catholic health institutions undertake not just in Australia, but around the world.

In his [message to mark the 30th World Day of the Sick on February 11](#), Pope Francis spoke directly to health care workers, recognising the importance of their work as infection rates and deaths from COVID-19 continue to rise.

This year's theme is "Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful", taken from Luke's Gospel. Pope Francis says: "Dear healthcare workers, your service alongside the sick, carried out with love and competence, transcends the bounds of your profession and becomes a mission.

"Your hands, which touch the suffering flesh of Christ, can be a sign of the merciful hands of the Father. Be mindful of the great dignity of your profession, as well as the responsibility that it entails."

The Catholic Church's World Day of the Sick, established by St John Paul II, is held on February 11, the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. It is an opportunity to devote special attention to the sick and to those who provide them with assistance and care both in health care institutions and within families and communities.

Bishop Karol Kulczycki SDS, the Bishop Delegate for Health for the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, said its health care services are a source of great pride for the Church.

"Fulfilling Jesus' call to the ministry of healing, the Catholic Church was at the forefront of the development of hospitals around the world and remains at the forefront of providing care, including through the pandemic," said Bishop Kulczycki.

"We honour those who are carrying out the healing ministry in the name of Christ, the Divine Healer and the inspiration of our service for all through our hospitals, aged care and other services."

Catholic Health Australia CEO Pat Garcia said Pope Francis' message urges the community to remember both the sick and the people who are caring for them.

"For the past two years, health care workers have been working incredibly hard to protect those who are in their care, often at great personal sacrifice to themselves," Mr Garcia said.

"In a world dominated by numbers of cases and death, our carers have never lost sight of the individual at the heart of the suffering and treated them with compassion and mercy."

To that end, Catholic Health Australia and Australian Catholic University are convening [a panel](#) of speakers on the World Day of the Sick to participate in a webinar to discuss some of the emerging impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the health care workforce: burn-out, fatigue and withdrawal.

Mr Garcia said: "The pandemic has shown there are great inequalities in health care around the world, and that even here in Australia there are some who have been harder hit. World Day of the Sick should remind us all that we should place great value in caring for the frail and the needy."

To invite others to also mark the day, Catholic Health Australia has distributed hundreds of specially commissioned lapel ribbons to Catholic leaders, politicians and members.