

### *You are the salt of the earth You are the light of the world*

The words of Jesus from the Gospel according to St. Matthew: "You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world," remain a source of inspiration today for those of us who care about our commitment to the world of Catholic health care.

I believe that these words of Christ invite us to see our commitment to the world of health care not only as a service to the sick and dying, but also as something capable of renewing and inspiring society itself. It is not simply charitable work, but profoundly social work that can eventually transform the entire world from an evangelical perspective.

I would like to tell you about something that happened when I was a young man. I was about 16 at the time and was attending a conference on Catholic schools. The guest speaker said something that touched me deeply. Allow me to paraphrase:

If the only difference between a Catholic school and an ordinary school is the religious education it provides, we would be better off to leave the education of the faith to the parish or the home. A Catholic school must be salt for the earth, a light for the world. In other words, a Catholic school must integrate evangelical values into everything it does. It cannot be satisfied with simply passing on the faith to its students; it must bring light to society at large and it must make its mark on the culture that surrounds it. A Catholic school must be the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

All of the gospels show that health was something very important to Jesus. He was constantly healing the sick. In the early days of his ministry two things seemed to attract the crowds: his teaching and his ministry of healing. Jesus wanted the people he met to lead full and abundant lives. And while restoration of health was a contributing factor in such a life, it was not necessarily the most important. More important was for the person to discover that he was loved by God and was capable of loving God and his fellow humans in return.

For Jesus, healing was part of something much larger than restoration of health. We Catholics working in health care must also adopt this broader perspective and rediscover our commitment as part of a true ministry, a participation in the work of Christ.

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