

## Taking Charge

*Each stage of life has its own beauty...and its own tasks.*

*John Paul II, Letter to the Elderly, 1999*

A young priest was asked by a tired looking husband to visit his wife who was critically ill at home. Standing in the bedroom, filled with the paraphernalia for the gravely ill, the pastor noticed the husband's gentle care for his wife. But even in sickness, the wife seemed to be concerned for her husband. "Jim, you look tired. Are you getting enough sleep?"

Soon she turned this care to the visiting priest when she discovered that he was new to the parish. "I hope everyone is making you feel at home Father?" She listened to the prayers, received the Sacrament of the Sick and the Eucharist, and felt blessed by her husband and the pastor. The young priest went away feeling equally anointed by this encounter with a person who was sick and by her caregiver. Illness may sometimes make us feel we are losing control, or may even challenge some of our long held beliefs.

It can force us to grapple with fear, anger, and the unknown. Still, we need not see ourselves as victims.



We can take charge of our illness. We can find small ways to continue to live life fully and meaningfully with the people we encounter each day. A smile, a kind word, a concern even for those who are concerned for us, brings peace.

We never lose the power to influence another person. Relatives, nurses, medical technicians, and cleaning staff, often report how they are encouraged by the courage and goodness they observe in a person who is sick. Our own pain can make us more willing to forgive others, so it may be a good time to reach out to someone who has something against us.

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Gracious God, through our own troubles may we grow more sensitive to the suffering of others. Help us to show them your compassion.

Liturgy of the Hours

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*An excerpt from **Living with Hope in Times of Illness**  
- Catholic Health Association of Canada*

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