



National Catholic Health Care Week

Daily Reflections and Prayers

National Catholic Health Care Week (Sunday, February 1 to Saturday, February 7, 2026)
recognizes the mission of Catholic health care organizations across Canada.

This year, we focus on the theme of **Open Hearts, Healing, Hope**, which invites us to explore how our shared humanity connects us and calls us to build a world where every person belongs, is respected, and can thrive. We celebrate our shared values rooted in Catholic social thought—Human Dignity, Compassion, Community, Participation, and Hope. These values speak across traditions and beliefs, offering a vision of healing that is both deeply personal and profoundly collective.

This week, we reflect on what it means to care—not only for others, but for the world we create together. In doing so, we affirm that healing is not only physical recovery, but the ongoing work of restoring wholeness, belonging, and purpose to our lives and our world.

In a world marked by division and uncertainty, may we celebrate the strength that comes from walking together and building relationships grounded in respect, compassion, and justice.

Inspired by the Gospel and grounded in shared beliefs and values, we work together to achieve a Canadian society that reaches out to every person who is suffering from illness, stigma, poverty or loneliness.

Purpose Statement, Catholic Health Alliance of Canada

We are called to be signs of hope for those of our brothers and sisters who experience hardships of any kind. Care given to them is a hymn to human dignity, a song of hope that calls for the choral participation of society as a whole.

Pope Francis
Spes Non Confundit, Jubilee of the Year 2025

The touch of compassion was the first medicine.

Love is above all a way of looking at life and a way of living--through your work, your efforts to change unjust social structures or your simple, heartfelt gesture of closeness and support.

Pope Leo XIV, *Dilexi Te* (2025)

Resources:

[CHAC Commitment Statements 2025](#)

Diversity Equity and Inclusion | Indigenous Peoples

[Catholic Social Thought](#)



Monday, February 2

Human Dignity: Honouring the Whole Person

Each one of us is a sacred being. We are put here by Creator for a purpose.

nêhiyawak Elder Mary Lee

In the joy of birth and the mystery of death, we experience life as sacred and learn to honor each life as a gift worthy of wonder and respect. Human dignity is not something to be earned or given—it is inherent and intrinsic to our being, a reflection of our shared humanity. At the heart of care is the conviction that every person matters. When we truly see another person, without judgment or condition, we acknowledge that each life holds beauty, mystery, and worth beyond circumstance. In Catholic health care, this means recognizing the sacredness of life in all its forms and at every stage and safeguarding the seeds of connection and courage inherent in human vulnerability.

Honouring dignity also means creating systems and relationships that uphold equality, justice, and compassion. It challenges us to notice when dignity is diminished—by poverty, prejudice, illness, or neglect—and to respond with courage and care. To see the whole person is to believe that healing begins with recognition: that behind every diagnosis or difficulty lies a story deserving of honour and hope.

Reflection

1. Bishop Desmond Tutu said “The deepest need of the human heart is to be seen.” How do I honour the dignity of those whose stories or struggles I don’t fully understand?
2. Where in my work or community do I see dignity being upheld—or denied—and how might I respond?

Prayer for Mindfulness

Creator, Breath of Life,

You have created each of us in Your image, bestowing upon us an inherent dignity that cannot be diminished. Help us to recognize and honour this sacred gift in every person we encounter. Grant us the courage to uphold the vision of human dignity in our daily lives. Inspire our hearts to tend to the needs of others, especially those who are marginalized, oppressed, and suffering. Empower us with Your Spirit to respond to injustice with compassion and resolve. May our actions reflect Your love and mercy, bringing comfort and hope to those in need.

Amen

Prayer for Upholding Human Dignity, *Caritas Scotland* (2024)



Tuesday, February 3

Compassion: The Heart of Care

Compassion is not a relationship between the healer and the wounded. It's a relationship between equals. Pema Chödrön

Compassion is not sentimentality. It is courage—or, as the Dalai Lama has said, “Compassion is the radicalism of our time.” It calls us to enter into another’s experience, to listen deeply, to stand present in both suffering and joy. True compassion begins when we allow another’s pain to touch us, not as outsiders offering charity, but as fellow human beings sharing the weight of being alive. In this way, compassion binds us together in mutual care, dissolving the false divisions of role, rank, or difference.

Catholic health care is for everyone, welcoming and caring for all who are suffering. In our practice, compassion is the language of healing. It is found in the quiet moment when we listens without rushing, in a hand held through fear, in kindness offered without condition. In the dark corners of grief, confusion, difficult choices and pain, human compassion can create space and grace for peace and hope to take root. Compassion transforms clinical care into a spiritual act—not through extraordinary acts, but through ordinary gestures that affirm *you matter, you are not alone, you are loved.*

Reflection

1. When has someone’s compassion changed your life or perspective?
2. It has been said that the greatest gift we can give each other is our presence. How can compassion guide my choices — especially when time, resources, or patience are scarce and when circumstances and decisions are complex?

Song of Commitment

We are pilgrims on a journey.
We are neighbours on the road.
We are here to help each other
Walk the mile and bear the load.
I will hold the Christ-light for you
In the night time of your fear.
I will hold my hand out to you;
Speak the peace you long to hear.
I will weep when you are weeping.
When you laugh, I'll laugh with you.
I will share your joy and sorrow
Till we've seen this journey through.

Servant Song © Universal Music – Brentwood Benson Publishing



Wednesday, February 4

Community: We Belong Together

We are all one family, no matter how distant our home.

Saint Kateri Tekakwitha, Lily of the Mohawks

I am because we are. The famous Ubuntu proverb is a beautiful expression of this truth: that human beings are created for relationship. We grow, heal, and thrive in connection — in the give and take of belonging. Catholic health care carries a promise to be present and remain in relationship with everyone receiving care. Community is not just a network of support, but a way of being that affirms our interdependence: your well-being and mine are intertwined. This means recognizing that every act of care — whether given or received — strengthens the web of life that sustains us all.

Yet community also asks something of us: to stay present when it's difficult, to bridge differences, to build trust even when things are complicated. Bishop Desmond Tutu said "Our differences are not a reason to fear, but an invitation to wonder and to grow." True community does not erase individuality; it honours diversity while nurturing shared purpose. When we build belonging, we build resilience — for individuals, families, and whole systems of care. Community reminds us that we heal together or not at all.

Reflection

1. What does belonging look and feel like in my workplace or community?
2. How do I help build a culture of care that includes all in my daily life and work?

Prayer for Inclusion

Heavenly Creator,

You made each of us unique.

Open our hearts to see the beauty in diversity and the strength in our unity.

Help us to listen with compassion, to learn from every person,
and to build a community where all feel valued and welcome.

Give us courage to embrace difference and
guide us to overcome prejudice in our hearts and actions.

May we create space for trust, respect and inclusion to flourish.

May we join hands together for a better world
for we are all part of Your one human family.

Amen.



Thursday, February 5

Participation: Every Voice Matters

This is important: to get to know people, listen, expand the circle of ideas. The world is crisscrossed by roads that come closer together and move apart, but the important thing is that they lead towards the Good.

Pope Francis

Participation is about shared responsibility and inclusion. It insists that every person has something vital to contribute—wisdom, experience, perspective—and that our communities are healthiest when all voices are heard. In health care, this means listening to those we serve and those we work alongside, ensuring that decisions reflect the lived realities of everyone affected by them.

But participation is also a spiritual practice, a way of affirming that each of us has agency and purpose. It invites us to shift from seeing people as “recipients” of care to seeing them in their whole context, along with their families and care network, as partners in shaping it. When we encourage participation, we cultivate belonging and trust. We remind one another that our voices matter, and that together, we are co-creators of a more compassionate and inclusive world.

Reflection

1. Supporting participation means removing barriers and creating the conditions that empower people to share their perspectives and influence change. What helps people feel safe enough to participate fully — and what barriers might I help remove?
2. How do I make space for others’ ideas and perspectives in the work I do?

Prayer of Engagement

Loving God,

You gather us into a circle of care where no one stands outside and no voice goes unheard. In this circle, You remind us that each person carries a piece of Your wisdom—that the stories, hopes, struggles, and questions we bring are gifts meant to be shared for the good of all.

Open our ears to listen deeply. Open our hearts to welcome perspectives different from our own. Open our hands to build spaces where people feel safe enough to speak, brave enough to contribute, and supported enough to participate fully in shaping their own care and our shared future.

May our communities become circles of belonging, where decisions are made with—not for—one another, and where each person’s voice strengthens the whole. Teach us to walk the roads that lead toward the Good, and to widen the circle so that all are gathered in.

Amen.



Friday, February 6

Hope and Justice: Action for a Better World

We must restore hope to young people, help the old, be open to the future, spread love. Be poor among the poor. We need to include the excluded and preach peace. Pope Francis

Hope is not naïve optimism. It is the fierce belief that the world can be made more whole, even when it feels broken. Chief Wilton Littlechild said “Hope is not just a feeling—it is a responsibility.” Justice is hope put into motion. In Catholic social thought, hope and justice are inseparable: both demand that we see the suffering of the world and choose to respond with love and courage. In health care, that response often takes the form of focusing on the wellbeing of those who are unseen or unheard.

To act with hope is to live as if healing is always possible, not only for bodies but for the human spirit, relationships, communities and systems. It is to trust that small, faithful acts—a conversation, thoughtful policy, a moment of empathy — are seeds of transformation. Justice and hope remind us that care is not only about tending to what is, but also about shaping what could be.

Reflection

1. What gives me hope in the face of challenge or injustice, and how do I draw on that hope in my work?
2. Philosopher Cornel West said “Justice is what love looks like in public.” How can my work—however small it may seem—help create a more just and compassionate world?

Prayer for Change

Lord of Hope,

We can choose to live differently! Inspire us as we make choices so that we will recognize the impact our lives have on our human family around the globe. Encourage us to be people of hope as we look forwards in faith, knowing that we can build a world of justice and peace.

Help us choose each day to live in a way that creates a better world for everyone and help us to know that our individual actions are made in solidarity with our sisters and brothers. You invite us to live simply, to live mindfully, and to live in solidarity with the poor.

Help us to respond to that invitation with conviction and generosity. With Your grace and guidance, help us to reclaim the future.

Amen

Adapted from [Prayer for the Sustainability of Our Earth](#), CHAUSA