



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC  
BISHOPS CONFERENCE

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### CATHOLIC CHURCH CELEBRATES ITS HEALTH CARE MINISTRY

Catholic health and aged care services invite the community to celebrate World Day of the Sick – now in its 31st year – and acknowledge the important work that these ministries continue to do under challenging circumstances.

In his message to mark the World Day of the Sick in 2023, Pope Francis cites the parable of the Good Samaritan as an enduring example of not abandoning those in need of our care and compassion.

The Holy Father writes: “The World Day of the Sick calls for prayer and closeness towards those who suffer. Yet it also aims to raise the awareness of God’s people, healthcare institutions and civil society with regard to a new way of moving forward together...

“Indeed, the conclusion of the parable of the Good Samaritan suggests how the exercise of fraternity, which began as a face-to-face encounter, can be expanded into organised care.

“The elements of the inn, the innkeeper, the money and the promise to remain informed of the situation (cf. Lk 10:34-35) all point to the commitment of healthcare and social workers, family members and volunteers, through whom good stands up in the face of evil every day, in every part of the world.”

The Catholic Church’s World Day of the Sick is held on February 11, the Feast of our Lady of Lourdes, and is an opportunity to devote special attention to the sick and to those who provide them with assistance and care both in healthcare institutions and within families and communities.

Catholic Health Australia CEO Pat Garcia said Pope Francis’ [message](#) also invites people to advocate for better and fairer health systems around the world to ensure no one is left behind.

“The wonderful people who work in our members’ hospitals and aged care facilities treat every encounter with the people in their care as an opportunity to demonstrate compassion. They have done this throughout COVID-19 and, in particular in aged care, they continue to deal with large numbers of infections and deaths.

“Our health and aged care members have shown remarkable resilience in the past three years but they face ongoing funding and operational challenges that threaten to undermine their



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mission – to serve those at society’s margins who need care and those who face abandonment.

“His Holiness is right to make this point on World Day of the Sick.”

“As an organisation we will continue to advocate for an equitable, compassionate, health and aged care system that is person-centred in its delivery of care. This World Day of the Sick I ask the community to take time to reflect and remember the valuable work that our ministries continue to do in caring for the sick, frail and the dying.”

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference president Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB said the World Day of the Sick is a fitting time to acknowledge the massive contribution the Church makes to health care in Australia.

“The deep engagement of the Catholic Church in health and aged care is a clear and practical expression of the Church’s role to keep alive in Australia the presence and ministry of Jesus as the healer of souls and bodies,” he said.

“Our nation is blessed with dozens of Catholic hospitals and hundreds of aged care services that provide high-quality care to people from all backgrounds – care which is grounded in our profound respect for the dignity of every human person.”