

Reflections on Marist Solidarity



I was sick and
you took care of me

(Matthew 25:36)



Prayer (XXVIII World Day of the Sick)

God the Father, in sickness you let us experience the vulnerability of frail creatures: Bestow upon us abundantly your compassion. Jesus Christ, Son of God, sustain us in times of illness and help us carry your burden. Holy Spirit, we pray to be restored in moments of weariness, that we might ourselves become instruments of your loving mercy.

“The call (of the Marists) is to be truly missionary: they are to go from place to place, announcing the word of God, reconciling, ... visiting the sick.” (CONST. 12)

“Sick confreres and those in retirement fulfil an important apostolic task through their presence, prayers, and loyalty to the Marist vocation.” (CONST. 138)

2. SICK AND ELDERLY

TESTIMONY

My name is Anna Maria, I am 65 years old, and I live in Marconia di Pisticci (Matera), in a condominium apartment with many architectural obstacles. When I was 26, I was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis. As this is an autoimmune disease, over the years I have developed many illnesses and I have had to undergo several surgeries. The last one, 13 years ago, consigned me to a wheelchair. Since my parents died, I live alone. I need someone to help me for my various needs. Dealing with all this hasn't been at all easy. The physical pain, the plans for my life wiped out, the impossibility of working, the lack of acceptance, have made me experience a real death, that of the soul. But "God on the mountain provides." I thank the Lord for consecrated people - especially the Marist Fathers - and the laity who comfort me with the grace of the sacraments (Confession and Communion) and weekly prayers. Thanks to this I feel I can say with certainty that only when I let Christ into my life, into my pain, can I sing with the psalmist: "*The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want...*"

Anna Maria Lopatriello

SPIRITUALITY

From Fr. Colin

- "When he met the brother infirmarian, he said to him: Farewell, my son; courage! You too are a martyr in caring for your sick; I learn with great pleasure that people are very pleased with you. Remember, my child, that you serve the suffering members of Jesus Christ when you care for the sick."
- *(A Founder Acts, 217,2)*

From the 2017 General Chapter

- Older Marists are a valuable gift to the Society: the elderly and infirm witness to Christian hope; their prayer, suffering and wisdom are a precious resource, making a unique contribution to community life and ministry. *(n. 58).*

From Pope Francis

- With this work of mercy, the Lord invites us to make an act of great humanity: sharing . Let us remember this word: sharing. Those who are sick often feel alone... A visit can make a person who is sick feel less alone, and a little companionship is great medicine! A smile, a caress, a handshake are simple gestures, but they are very important for those who feel abandoned. How many people dedicate themselves to visiting the sick in hospitals or in their homes! It is a priceless voluntary work. When it is done in the Lord's name, moreover, it also becomes an eloquent and effective expression of mercy. *(General audience 11/09/2016)*

FOR REFLECTION

To be instruments of God's mercy is more beneficial to us than to others: a deed, a word, a visit are acts that restore joy and dignity to the fragile, the sick and the elderly.

- Do we seek to give them time and comfort? Are we ready to listen to them and serve them? Do we believe that closeness to those who suffer can also enrich us?
- The Pope says: "The elderly are also the present and the future of the Church which, together with the young, prophesies and dreams". Do we believe these words to be true?

