



# Sisters of the Holy Family

To seek out and advocate for the poor and needy, especially families, for the Kingdom of God.

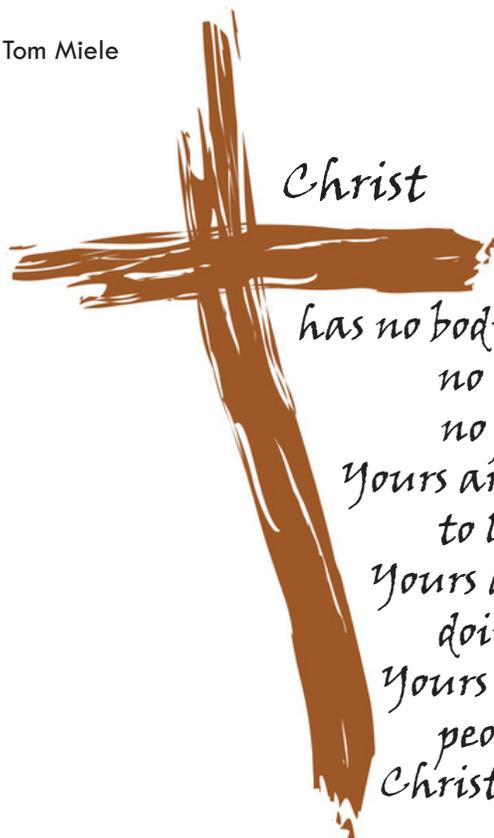
## Prayer

O most Divine healer!  
 You healed those who approached through a gentle touch or word. None who came to You were denied. Let Your justice roll down on this country. Let it convert those who place wealth above health. Bless those who are ill needing treatment, but who lack the money to pay for it. Let this country's style of government change to serve its people, not corporate interests. Bless those who are today's healers, doctors, nurses, and all medical staff. Let them be filled with Your mercy and compassion, as they touch the ill, the suffering, the dying. Bless them in their mission in service to all. In Jesus' name. Amen.

- Tom Miele

Almighty God, help us this day to direct our attention and concern to the poor, needy and sick in our local communities. Let us hear their hopes and their struggles. Help us to respond in an effort to restore their faith and their belief in their human dignity. May we find within ourselves the conviction to always put the powerless foremost in our minds and hearts. Let us so live that all who know us may know that you are a God who cares, when they experience our care and concern. Let us draw strength from each other as we share our talents for the good of the people we serve in all of our facilities. – We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.

- US Conference of Catholic Bishops



*Christ*

*has no body on earth but yours,  
 no hands, but yours,  
 no feet, but yours.*

*Yours are the eyes through which Christ's compassion is to look out on the world.*

*Yours are the feet with which Christ is to go about doing good work.*

*Yours are the hands with which Christ is to bless all people now.*

*Christ has no body now on earth but yours.*

- Teresa of Avila (1515–1582)

O God, you are life, source of all that is. By your word you brought forth sun and moon, stars and planets, plants and every green thing, animals and all that has breath.

By your wisdom you evolved our fragile home through the millenia.

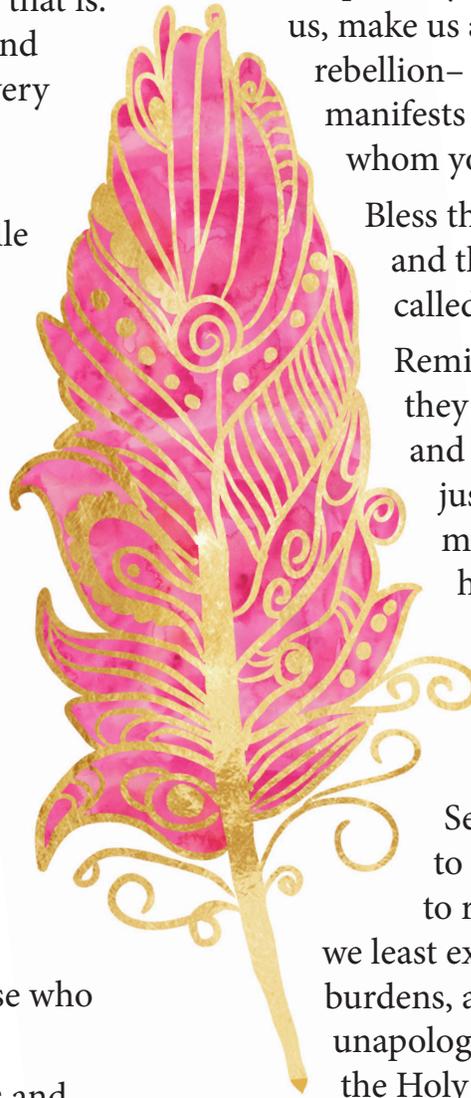
By your mercy you sustain your creation, today and every day.

By your might you guide your people through sunshine and storm.

In one particular time and place, you made yourself known to us in Jesus, whose ministry took him to the margins, to those whom society had declared unclean, undeserving, unworthy.

In a spirit of mercy and holy rebellion, Jesus reached across boundaries and healed by his touch, restoring life and life abundant to those who had been cut off from community.

Your healing is known across all faiths and among all cultures.



So inspired by the great love you have shown us, make us agents of that same holy rebellion– the divine obedience that manifests your love and mercy for all whom you have created.

Bless the work of our elected officials and the ministry to which you have called them.

Remind them of the communities they have promised to serve, and inspire them to strive for justice, especially for those most vulnerable, that all may have access to quality health care, and so all may be strengthened in body and spirit to serve your planet and your people.

Send us forth with your blessing, to be a blessing to all we meet, to receive blessing from those we least expect, to bear one another's burdens, and to love, fiercely and unapologetically, in the strong name of the Holy One to whom we pray.

Amen.

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## Prayer for the Uninsured

Father of goodness and love, hear our prayers for the uninsured members of our community and for all who are in need.

For those who seek care but find that it is out of reach, may they find consolation in your healing presence.

For all who are blessed with health and security, may they work to fulfill the needs of those who are sick and insecure.

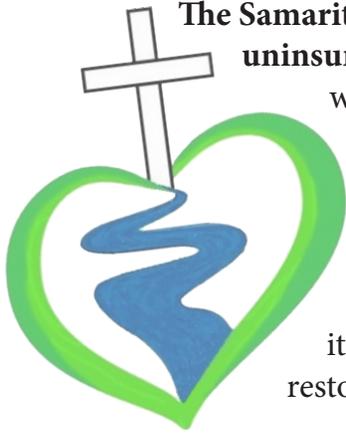
For leaders who make decisions that affect the health and well-being of others, may they strive to ensure the fundamental right to health care.

We ask this through Christ our Lord who healed those who believed.

Amen.



# Considerations for Health Care Reform



**The Samaritan principle sets the tone for the Christian church regarding care for the poor, uninsured, and desperate in our land.** Simply put, in the care a Samaritan extends to a

wounded, helpless victim, Jesus declares what it means to be an authentic neighbor.

If we have the resources to help and heal, we should. Not because we'll get reimbursed, gain profit, or be recognized or rewarded, but because it reflects the caring, healing intention of God for God's people in relationship to one another and in witness to the world. We cannot pass by because we presume somebody else will take care of uninsured people. We cannot ignore what's happening because it's just bigger than us or beyond us. Jesus calls us to see, respond, help, comfort, and restore - as if those left out and wounded were our very own.

**Jesus' ministry of healing was conducted in the face of structures and regulations designed to control, limit, and exclude.** Health and healing was front and center for Jesus. Undoubtedly, Jesus' healings were a sign that he was the anticipated Messiah and that a new era was beginning. However, Jesus' healings also confronted, exposed, and undermined age-old systems that, in the name of health care, prevented healing from occurring. Jesus cut through the red tape, system-serving regulations, and control-oriented rituals to actually offer what God desired for people - healing, restoration, and a future of dignity and hope. Instead of defending the current status quo practices that place ordinary folks in similar binds, the people who follow and claim to reflect Jesus should consider how he judged and exposed the ineffectiveness and meaning of structures that served themselves at others' expense.

**The context of community, inclusion, and sharing resources to assist the neediest -- central in the early church witness - is a pattern and principle to renew.** Beginning with Acts 2, we see the earliest believers holding things in common, pooling resources, and selling off assets in order to meet the needs of the weakest among them. It was not about me and mine, but we and ours. The perspective of that early faith community was that personal self-interest includes everybody's well-being. They understood we are deeply interconnected. The apostle, Paul, affirmed this principle with his counsel that we are members of one another, that no part can say to another, "I don't need you." To what extent are there such awarenesses or practices in the church today? And to what extent is our sense of community -- over against asserting individual privilege and private right-bearing witness to the larger community and nation of what is good, possible, and godly?

**Let us embody and advocate for the principles, practices, and norms of the beloved community toward which Jesus pointed.** Christians have no stake in propping up old-order systems, or aligning ourselves with self-serving institutions, or playing to sub-Christian social stratifications. At personal, community, and systemic levels, Christians are challenged to practice now the norms and promises of the future described in the scriptures.



- Adapted from an article by John Hay Jr., at [www.sojournal.net](http://www.sojournal.net)

**TAKE ACTION:** Making a contribution to the **Sisters of the Holy Family Mission Fund** will guarantee your gift makes an impact on programs that benefit healthcare access:

[www.bit.do/SHFDonate](http://www.bit.do/SHFDonate)

**Sources for this handout include:** [SocialJusticeResourceCenter.org](http://SocialJusticeResourceCenter.org), [USCCB.org](http://USCCB.org) and Health Care for All!, Office for Domestic Social Development, USCCB.

# Health and Catholic Social Teaching

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has long advocated health care for all. In the pastoral letter, **Health and Health Care: A Pastoral Letter of the American Catholic Bishops**, they stated the Church's belief that health care is a basic human right, and calling for the development of a national health insurance program to "comprehensive health care system that will ensure a basic level of health care for all Americans." Pope John XXIII, in his encyclical **Peace on Earth**, listed health care among those basic rights which flow from the sanctity and dignity of human life. In the same tradition, Pope John Paul II addressed the need for health care in **On Human Work**, where he focused on the availability and affordability of health care for workers.

As recently as this past year, the Bishops have called on Congress to pass legislation that begins to remove current and impending barriers to access and affordability, particularly for those most in need. Health care must flow from our principles that protect the fundamental life and dignity of the human person and the societal principles of justice, which are best safeguarded when such vital needs are provided for in a context of human love and reason, and when the delivery of care is determined at the lowest reasonable level.

Our rich tradition of Catholic social and moral teaching should guide health care reform. "It is a matter of fundamental justice. For so many, it is literally a matter of life and death, of lives cut short and dignity denied." The USCCB urge national leaders to look beyond special interests and partisanship and to unite our nation in a "commitment to meeting the health care needs of our people, especially the poor and vulnerable."

Source: [www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/health-care/upload/health-care-comprehensive-care.pdf](http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/health-care/upload/health-care-comprehensive-care.pdf) and [www.chausa.org/docs/default-source/health-progress/6c74dc62b3b1417388be61fbce2c41e41-pdf.pdf?sfvrsn=0](http://www.chausa.org/docs/default-source/health-progress/6c74dc62b3b1417388be61fbce2c41e41-pdf.pdf?sfvrsn=0)

## What You Can Do

- Pray for the sick and vulnerable, especially those who do not have access to health care.
- Learn about Catholic social teaching and how it is applied to health care. Go to:
  - USCCB [www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/health-care/index.cfm](http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/health-care/index.cfm)
  - CHA [www.chausa.org](http://www.chausa.org) web sites for more information about Catholic advocacy on health care.
- Educate people in your parish or community about Catholic social teaching and health care.
- Visit websites for information about the state of health care in the U.S. and proposals to reform the health care system. If there is a Catholic health care ministry in your area, find out what challenges they face in serving the poor.
- Advocate improvements in the health care system.
- Contact your elected officials and share with them Catholic teaching on health care and the principles and priorities the Bishops use in assessing health care proposals.
- Join your parish, diocesan or state legislative network.

*Respect for Life*

*Priority  
Concern for the  
Poor*

*Universal  
Access to  
Comprehensive  
Benefits*

*Pursuing the  
Common Good  
and Preserving  
Pluralism*

