

11TH FEBRUARY, 2021
OUR LADY OF LOURDES
WORLD DAY OF THE SICK

Today, on the memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes is also The World Day of the Sick. In his letter to mark this 29th World Day of the Sick, Pope Francis has called for us to remember those who continue to suffer the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic.

In the Gospels we do hear the extent to which Jesus was surrounded by the sick everywhere he went whether it was village, town or farm. Jesus for sure drew to himself those who were sick and broken. We are told how the people *'brought the sick on stretchers to wherever they heard he was'*. On this day of the Sick we cannot but underline the importance of the relationship between those who are able bodied and those who are sick. One of the factors of the Coronavirus pandemic is that those who are well and those who are poorly all find themselves in it. The pandemic does not allow room for observer or spectator and there can be no victim left to themselves. The sickness of one person becomes the sickness of us all. The struggles in this time of the pandemic, the brokenness and suffering we experience in the course of it makes us more in need of each other. Let the cracks brought about by the pandemic in our lives allow the Lord's light to enter and shine on us. Let the experience of the cross enable us to grow we in grow in our relationship with the risen Lord.

In his letter, Pope Francis said: *"Dear brothers and sisters, the commandment of love that Jesus left to his disciples is also kept in our relationship with the sick. A society is all the more human to the degree that it cares effectively for its most frail and suffering members, in a spirit of fraternal love. Let us strive to achieve this goal, so that no one will feel alone, excluded or abandoned."*

From the Grotto of Lourdes and her many other shrines throughout the world, may Mary sustain our faith and hope, and help us care for one another with fraternal love.