

MEDIA RELEASE: Observing World Day of the Sick

9.2.09

On Wednesday February 11, the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, the Catholic Church will observe the 17th World Day of the Sick. The *Catholic Commission for Social Justice* is making a special plea for all of us in TT to use this day to continue to pray for the sick; to reflect on the way in which we care for the sick in our communities; to commit ourselves to reach out with love and compassion to those who are sick and to care-givers whose needs are often ignored.

Love of neighbour and our common humanity require that we take action to promote human dignity and human development. In his recent message to the world for the observance of this day, Pope Benedict XVI stated that the Church "vigorously upholds the absolute and supreme dignity of every human life," which "is beautiful and must be lived in its fullness even when it is weak..."

His message is dedicated to children who suffer not only because of illness, but also because of war, violence, and exploitation. From all of these children, the Pope states, "there goes up a silent cry of pain that calls upon our consciences as men and believers."

Each of us has a role to play in promoting our own physical, mental and social well-being. We can do much to promote a culture of 'wellness' in our communities: physical, mental, spiritual, emotional, environmental, intellectual, financial, occupational etc. Wellness is "generally used to mean a healthy balance of the mind-body and spirit that results in an overall feeling of well-being." (Wikipedia)

We pray for those involved in pastoral care in health; for volunteers, doctors, nurses and other health care professionals. We pray also that God will inspire our leaders so that they will be able to meet the many health sector development challenges in our country. May He guide them as they review health care policies and provision and strive to provide equitable access to comprehensive health care in TT in terms of prevention, treatment, rehabilitation etc.

Archbishop Edward Gilbert has extended an invitation to "all those who work with the sick – doctors, nurses, caregivers – to join in the local celebrations in your parishes and especially at the Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes in Maraval next Sunday, February 15. Our Lady, Health of the Sick, pray for us."

For further information contact Leela Ramdeen on 290 1635 or 299 8945.