



Thursday, January 28, 2010

To the Pastors and All the Faithful of the Diocese of Prince Albert,

Greetings of peace to you and your loved ones!

Since May 12th of 1992, we have been remembering our 'sick ones' on the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes on February 11th every year.

This day is approaching very quickly, and I would like to take this opportunity to encourage each Christian Community, together with family and friends, to have their elderly and sick people anointed by their parish priest.

Jesus throughout his whole life has healed the wounds of many people, cured many from their diseases and has made whole those who have suffered. Through the Sacrament of the Sick, we continue the Mission of Christ by extending our hands to those who have become weak and vulnerable in our sight.

We are called upon to accompany those who are ill, rekindling in them the hope of a speedy recovery and to support those in the final stages of their illness. In his apostolic letter *Salvifici dolores*, the Servant of God John Paul II has illuminating words on the subject: "*Human suffering*", he wrote, "*has reached its culmination in the passion of Christ. And at the same time it has entered into a completely new dimension and a new order: it has been linked to love, to that love which creates good, drawing it out by means of suffering, just the supreme good of the Redemption of the world was drawn from the Cross of Christ, and from that Cross constantly take it beginning. The Cross of Christ has become a source from which flow rivers of living water*" (n. 18).

The Shrine in Lourdes has always been a centre of prayer and healing. We ask the Blessed Mother to help us to accept our illnesses and to learn from them as they can become a school of hope and grace through her intercession, that the healing hand of Christ will be revealed to us even today.

In the dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium* we read that "*Christ was sent by the Father 'to bring good news to the poor, to heal the contrite of heart' (Lk 4:18), 'to seek and to save what was lost' (Lk 19:10). Similarly, the Church encompasses with love all who are afflicted with humans suffering and in the poor and afflicted sees the image of its poor and suffering Founder. It does all it can to relieve their need and in them it strives to serve Christ*" (n. 8.) In our diocese we still have one Catholic institution, Mont. St. Joseph. This institute continues to express through their Catholic health care and services the mission of Christ.

Our Catholic institutions are challenged as they try to express the compassionate love of our Lord to our elderly and sick. We must remember that these institutions belong to us. As stewards, we must demonstrate our faith and exemplify what true care is all about.

On the 11th of February, let us petition our Blessed Mother Mary to help us continue the mission of her Son. May she bless the sick and the elderly, and hear our prayers in support those who administrate and provide personal care in our institutions.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Albert Thévenot, M. Afr.
Bishop of Prince Albert