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Just Start (7): Be Close to the Suffering

A new video in the series on the works of mercy, for the Jubilee of Mercy. People from the U.S., Germany, Brazil and Chile talk about their efforts to assist those who are suffering.

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Suggestions for action

— Seek information about institutions that care for the elderly, the sick, children or immigrants, and

to the extent possible provide your personal assistance and prayer.

— Look for specific people around you in need of special care, affection or good advice, and try to find ways to serve them.

— Care for a sick person in your home with a true spirit of service: preparing meals, accompanying them, showing affection, etc.

— Consider how to explain to a sick person, with refinement, the sanctifying and redemptive value of their circumstances: their prayer, before God, has immense value.

— In your personal prayer, consider how you treat those you live with you, seeking ways to be more affectionate and to offer appropriate advice.

Quotes from Sacred Scripture to reflect on

— Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God (*2 Cor 1:3-4*).

— I myself am satisfied about you, my brethren, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to instruct one another (*Rom 15:14*).

— Then Jesus told his disciples, “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it” (*Mt 16:24-25*).

Quotes from Pope Francis to reflect on

— We cannot be messengers of God's comfort if we do not first feel the joy of being comforted and loved by Him. This happens especially when we hear his Word, the Gospel, which we should carry in our pocket: do not forget this! The Gospel in your pocket or purse, to read regularly. And this gives us comfort: when we abide in silent prayer in his presence, when we encounter Him in the Eucharist or in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. All this comforts us (Angelus, 7 December 2014).

— The Lord does not only speak to us in the intimacy of the heart; yes, he speaks to us, but not only there; he also speaks to us through the voice and witness of the brethren. It is truly a great gift to be able to meet men and women of faith who, especially in the most complicated and important stages of our lives, help us to bring light to our heart

and to recognize the Lord's will!
(Audience, 7 May 2014).

— Always seek to make your gaze one of welcome, offering a helping hand that elevates and sustains, a word of comfort, a tender embrace. Do not become discouraged because of difficulties and fatigue, but continue to give of your time, your smile and your love to your brothers and sisters who are in need. May every sick and frail person see in your faces the face of Jesus, and may you come to see Christ's own flesh in every suffering person (Address, 9 November 2013).

Quotes from Saint Josemaria to reflect on

— I have a sick person waiting for me, and I have no right to make someone who is sick wait, since that person is Christ (November 1972).

— Those well-timed words, whispered into the ear of your wavering friend; the helpful conversation that you managed to start at the right moment; the ready professional advice that improves his university work; the discreet indiscretion by which you open up unexpected horizons for his zeal. This all forms part of the “apostolate of friendship” (*The Way*, no. 973).

— The spread of social remedies against the plagues of suffering or poverty ... can never replace (because these social remedies are on another plane) the effective tenderness, both human and supernatural, of our direct personal contact with our neighbor: with that poor person in a nearby neighborhood, with that other sick person who is suffering in an immense hospital; or with that other person, perhaps rich, who is in need of a bit of affectionate conversation,

a Christian friendship to ease their loneliness (Letter, 24 October 1942).

— When you are ill, offer up your sufferings with love, and they will turn into incense rising up in God's honour, and making you holy (*The Forge*, no. 791).

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