

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
CATHOLIC CHAPLAINS

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February 11, 2014

World Day of the Sick

NAME

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Your Excellency:

On this 2014 World Day of the Sick, the National Association of Catholic Chaplains (NACC) extends to you our gratitude for your pastoral leadership in caring for the ill, aging, and dying. We are also grateful to Pope Francis for his benediction on this day: "I entrust this Twenty-second World Day of the Sick to the intercession of Mary. I ask her to help the sick to bear their sufferings in fellowship with Jesus Christ and to support all those who care for them. To all the ill, and to all the health-care workers and volunteers who assist them, I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing."

In April of 1965, the Administrative Board of the National Catholic Welfare Conference (NCWC) established the NACC. Its statement of purpose included, "to assist the chaplain toward the realization of progressively higher ideals, with attendant spiritual, intellectual, and personal characteristics, in the pastoral care of patients and staff of the institution." Next year, in 2015, the NACC will celebrate its 50th anniversary as it "continues the healing ministry of Jesus in the name of the Church." Our 2400 priests, deacons, religious brothers and sisters, lay women and men continue to tend to the spiritual and religious needs of those in the institutions they serve. And we remain grateful you, the ordinaries and bishops of our Church for your pastoral leadership and support.

In a particular way, the NACC is deeply grateful to Archbishop Paul Coakley, Archbishop of Oklahoma City, as he has completed his three-year term of service and ecclesial leadership to the NACC as the USCCB Episcopal Liaison. We greatly appreciated his guidance and support. We also welcome Bishop Donald Hying, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee who was recently appointed by Archbishop Joseph Kurtz, USCCB president, to be Episcopal Liaison to the NACC. We are thankful to Bishop Hying for acceptance of this responsibility, as he provides guidance to the NACC as a member of the NACC Board of Directors and chairs the NACC Episcopal Advisory Council. A copy of the NACC Advisory Council is included with this letter.

Included in last year's February 11, 2013, World Day of the Sick letter was a document that provided examples of ways ordinaries and auxiliary bishops of dioceses have been building relationships and structures of communication and accountability with NACC members so that our members' ministry is more integrated with the diocesan mission and ministry within which they serve. Several ordinaries found this document helpful so I am including that document again with this letter. As some dioceses requested our support to arrange meetings with our members, we are very willing to do so if you would like that assistance.

At the November 16, 2013 meeting of the NACC Episcopal Advisory Council the members discussed, among their topics, the changing face of health care within which most (seventy-five percent) of our member's minister. As health care is a business, professional associations dedicated to educate and certify spiritual care professionals and chaplains, also need to advocate for the profession of spiritual care in health care. As health care entities seek cost-saving measures, spiritual care provision can be at risk unless it can evidence that it makes a difference to patient satisfaction and perception of quality care, and impact health services. There is a growing body of research on spiritual care delivery that speaks to those very business concerns. The Episcopal Advisory Council members asked me to include some of those research findings as part of the information in this packet. You will, therefore, find with this letter such a document that has excerpts from an article I wrote that was published last spring in the Catholic Health Association's journal, *Health Progress*.

Also, if you are an ordinary receiving this letter and you have NACC members in your (arch)diocese, you will find a current list of those members who work and/or reside in your dioceses. Several ordinaries continue to express their appreciation for this list. The NACC welcomes and wants communication from you, if you or your delegate, upon review the list, need clarity or have questions about the names on the list.

The NACC is grateful to you for the diverse ways you offer your support of our members in their ministry to the ill, aging, and dying. During our Annual Appeal, many of you also financially support the mission of the NACC, for which we are deeply grateful.

If there are other ways, the NACC can be of support to you, please let me know. Please contact me (dlichter@nacc.org) or Bishop Donald Hying (bishophying@archmil.org), if you have questions about the work of the NACC, NACC members in your (arch)diocese, or any other concern.

In Christ's service,



David A. Lichter
Executive Director, NACC

cc: Bishop Donald Hying