

## SHARING COMPASSION... THE GREAT COMMANDMENT

“On his journey to Jerusalem Jesus passed along the borders of Samaria and Galilee. As he was entering a village, ten lepers met him. Keeping their distance, they raised their voices and said, ‘Jesus, Master, have pity on us!’” (Luke 17:11-12)

Jesus, the incarnation of God's love and compassion in the world, wasn't afraid to have pity on the lepers who approached him for a cure. Jesus knew the lepers were children of God.

Lepers were the untouchable and undesirable people of their time, isolated from the rest of the community, suffering the pain of rejection and alienation. Jesus shared the kingdom of God with the lepers and made them feel whole again.

There are many people in our world who are anxious to be whole again, to be cured of spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical pain. There are people who need to be touched with the love and compassion of Jesus.

Perhaps the people who are most identified as contemporary lepers are those living with HIV/AIDS. So many of our sisters and brothers living with HIV/AIDS feel rejected, abandoned, and alienated from the community. Yet the gospel makes it clear that nothing can separate us from the love and mercy of God that come to us through Jesus.

The Great Commandment teaches us to love our neighbor. We must welcome and embrace all who are sick and ill. Jesus did not run away and hide from the lepers of his time. He reached out and loved them.

Each of us will encounter a person living with HIV/AIDS. Like Jesus we need to offer the cure for all times and seasons: God's unconditional love and compassion.

## SHARING COMPASSION... PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION

- Am I aware of God's unconditional love and acceptance?
- Do I find it difficult to love and accept myself?
- Do I find it difficult to love and accept my neighbor?
- Am I judgmental of others?
- Do I feel comfortable with those who are sick and ill?
- Do I avoid people I do not understand?
- Do I have a caring and compassionate attitude towards others?
- Am I involved in a community service project?
- Am I open to different cultures, traditions, and experiences?

## SHARING COMPASSION... PRAYER FOR HOPE AND HEALING

*This prayer may be used for community prayer, family prayer, or individual prayer.*

### OPENING PRAYER

**All:** Loving Creator, we are made in the image of your goodness and love.

**Bless** us with the courage to share the many gifts you have generously shared with us.

Let us hear your call  
to love one another;  
to help the poor;  
to welcome the stranger;  
to visit the sick;  
and to comfort the afflicted.

Let us hear your call  
to forgive those who hurt us;  
to be reconciled with those we have hurt;

and to be united in our love for you.  
Let us hear your call  
to be instruments of compassion, healing,  
love, and peace.

May we walk humbly with you,  
seeking only the grace to do your will in our  
daily lives.

God of love and compassion,  
we ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.  
Amen.

## THE WORD OF GOD      LUKE 17:11-19

### REFLECTION

*Invite those present to share their experience, strength, and hope relevant to the passage from Luke. Some suggested topics:*

- What do I need from Jesus?
- At the moment, what are my needs?
- Can I name my pain?
- How has Jesus answered my prayer for help?
- What am I most grateful for in my life?

### PRAYER OF HEALING

**One:** O God, you created each of us in love.  
With love in our hearts, we ask you to  
hear our prayer:

**All:** Teach us your way of love and  
compassion.

Show us the way to transcend the boundaries of  
race, nationality, culture, and way of life.

Take away our fear of others, and replace our  
fear with understanding.

Make us instruments of your healing and help  
us to reach out to others with compassion.

**One:** O God, you trust that we will turn to you  
with our needs and desires. In faith and  
hope we humbly ask you for help:

**All:** Be present to our sisters and brothers living  
with HIV/AIDS so that they feel your love.

Give courage to those living with AIDS-related conditions so that they live in strength and hope.

Bless the families and friends of those living with HIV/AIDS with peace so that they live each day with patient endurance.

Show those who care for people living with HIV/AIDS your way of respect and compassion so that they may comfort the weak and vulnerable.

Shine the light of knowledge and wisdom on all who search for a cure for AIDS.

Grant all church leaders true pastoral wisdom so that they may see your image in every person they meet.

Lead all government officials and civic leaders to be generous so that they may work to develop programs and services for all people living with HIV/AIDS.

Teach all of us to accept and care for our brothers and sisters living with HIV/AIDS so that we learn your way of justice and generosity.

Touch and comfort all those who grieve for people who have died from AIDS so that they come to a place of peace, surrender, and acceptance.

**One:** *O God, you are deserving of all our love.  
In gratitude for you we pray:*

**All:** We thank you for listening to our needs and desires.

We trust that you will hear us and answer us.

We offer you our life, our will, and our love in appreciation for all that you do for us. Amen.

#### OUR FATHER

#### CONCLUDING PRAYER

**All:** Dear God, you created us to love one another. Help us to reach out to others to share your compassion. Help us to be united with all

who suffer from HIV/AIDS so that we might walk always in solidarity towards your light and truth. We ask this through Jesus our Lord. Amen.

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#### SHARING COMPASSION... RESOURCES

##### **National Catholic AIDS Network**

Box 422984

San Francisco, CA 94142-2984

tel: (707) 874-3031 • fax: (707) 874-1433

email: [info@ncan.org](mailto:info@ncan.org)

web site: [www.ncan.org](http://www.ncan.org)

##### **National Minority AIDS Council**

1931 13<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20009

tel: (202) 483-6622 • fax: (202) 483-1135

email: [info@nmac.org](mailto:info@nmac.org)

web site: [www.nmac.org](http://www.nmac.org)

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#### SHARING COMPASSION... PROMISING PRACTICES

- Collaborate with ecumenical and interfaith groups to plan a prayer vigil for persons living with HIV/AIDS.
- Organize an educational forum to discuss the emotional, spiritual, and psychological impact of HIV/AIDS in the community.
- Train volunteers to visit persons living with HIV/AIDS
- Establish a Hospitality Center for persons living with HIV/AIDS in your community.

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# HIV/AIDS

## SHARING



## THE COMPASSION OF GOD

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A program of  
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