

## 7. Visit the Sick

### GATHERING

The sick are vulnerable. They are often unable to help themselves, are locked in fear about their capacity to get well and yearn for company in the long hours of confinement. When poverty and sickness intersect, human dignity is often the first casualty. There are many examples of people who have reached out to the impoverished poor – two shining examples are Nano Nagle, foundress of the Presentation Sisters and St Theresa of Calcutta.

### READING

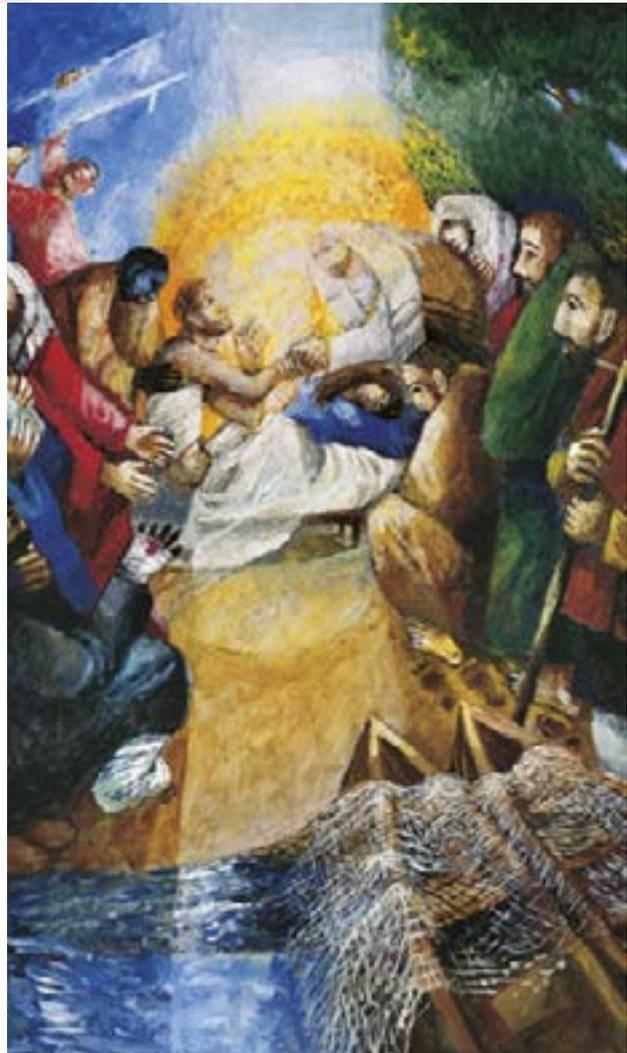
I spotted two nuns in their distinctive blue and white saris. I ran towards them, “There’s a man lying on the roadside. I’m not sure if he’s dead.” They responded immediately by helping him and calling an ambulance. Mother Teresa and her sisters picked people off filthy pavements to allow them to die in dignity. To my knowledge, there’s still no one else doing that. Seeing Mother Teresa through the eyes of the man on the Kolkata street makes me pause. What would happen to these people if it weren’t for the Teresas of this world reaching out to them in ways I certainly couldn’t. ([goo.gl/uRXJrG](http://goo.gl/uRXJrG))

Pius O’Farrell (p 86) refers to the works other than education carried out by Nano as “lantern work”:

‘Lantern work’ was not a step to evangelisation but an early and essential part of evangelisation itself. Nano helped the sick and consoled the wretched. The essence of Nano’s social work was the caring process which fosters community. She added something – an indefinable warmth – to the social vision found in France. She added the leaven of deep compassion and joyful hospitality that reached its peak in her Christmas dinners.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

When Jesus came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him. A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, “Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.” Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. “I am willing,” he said. “Be clean!” (Matthew 8:1-3)



### DISCUSSION

The healing hands, the healing presence... how does your ministry respond to Jesus’ call to visit the sick?

### PRAYER (PAUSE FOR ANY SPECIAL INTENTIONS)

Healer and sustainer,

Remind us of the vulnerability of the sick, the frail and those with chronic diseases

May we be willing, as Jesus was, to reach out to those who struggle with their health.

Inspire us to follow the example of Nano Nagle and St Teresa of Calcutta who courageously encountered sickness and poverty.

We remember those in our community who are sick (pause for names)

Amen.

*May the works of mercy inspire and enrich your ministry in Mercy Partners*

## LIVING THE CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY

### Visit the sick

*Ask: What brings comfort to the sick?*

*Be there for people who need you*

*Be aware of those in your community who are unwell*

### Bury the dead

*Ask: What do you need to bury?*

*Put away those things which can bring you down*

*Move on from the negatives of the past*

*Remember with gratitude those who have gone before*

### Show mercy to our common home

*Ask: What you can do to nurture the earth*

*Practise simple daily gestures which respect the earth*

*Show mercy to all of creation*

*Support action for the environment*

### Feed the hungry

*Ask: Who is hungry and why?*

*Protect food sources and biodiversity*

*Share resources – ‘be more’ rather than ‘have more’*

*Support those who feed the most vulnerable*

### Give drink to the thirsty

*Ask: What are people thirsting for?*

*Oppose the privatisation of water*

*Be ever mindful of people who need water*

### Clothe the naked

*Ask: Who is the vulnerable?*

*Protect the old, young, homeless, poor, trafficked...*

*Act for those who need human warmth*

*Be grateful for those who surround you in warmth and comfort*

### Welcome the stranger

*Ask: Who needs a safe space?*

*Reach out to the unloved and the unpopular*

*Practise radical hospitality*

### Visit the imprisoned

*Ask: What captures people today?*

*Give up attitudes and habits which enslave*

*Help those who are prisoners and those confined by fear or loneliness*

### VISIT THE SICK

- > **Support** caregivers of chronically sick family members on a one-time or periodic basis. Offer the caregivers time off from their responsibilities so they can rest, complete personal chores, or enjoy a relaxing break.
- > **Think** about how you can spend time volunteering at a nursing home and get creative with sharing your talents (e.g. sing, read, paint, call Bingo, etc.).
- > **Make a change** to your weekend plans. Take time to stop and visit with an elderly neighbor or schedule to visit the sick, the homebound, and those in nursing homes — whether they are family, friends, or complete strangers.
- > **Give** your time to the Meals-on-Wheels program where you will find many socially isolated elderly people. Or ask your parish priest to direct you toward those who need visiting in the parish.
- > **“Feel”** for and do not forget your own family. Older relatives can be overlooked and too often forgotten.

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COMPASSION JUSTICE RESPECT HOPE



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