Homily — World Day of the Sick

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Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels
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My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Today we are celebrating, as I said before, the World Day of the Sick. It was a celebration that was established, as we probably know, by St. John Paul II, who, himself, was a beautiful witness to the redemptive power of sickness and suffering that is united with the Cross of Christ.

And St. John Paul wanted to associate this celebration with our Blessed Mother Mary, especially in the devotion to Mary as our Lady of Lourdes, remembering those apparations of our Blessed Mother in France.

And as we know, since that time Lourdes has become a place of pilgrimage for the sick and a place where many have experienced miracles of redemption and healing.

So today we especially go to the intercession of Mary, our Blessed Mother. We come, confident in Mary’s maternal protection. We ask her intercession for all those who are suffering in body, mind, spirit or soul — those who are sick and those who are disabled; those facing any disease and those facing terminal illnesses.

But we also pray for all those who assume the beautiful responsibility of taking care of their own loved ones. And for the ones who work in the ministry of care and service to the sick and the elderly.

We invoke Mary today to help us, because we know that she has a mother’s concern for us and she always pays attention to her children’s needs.

It is a beautiful truth — that wherever we are, the Mother of Jesus is there for us.

As we heard today in the Gospel, she knew when the wine for the wedding ran short. Mary also knows when we have run out wine — when our health is failing, when we are suffering, and when we are feeling burdened with cares and weighed down with troubles.

And Mary, our Blessed Mother, brings our troubles and needs to Jesus, just as we heard in the Gospel today.

As we heard, Mary tells Jesus: They have no wine.
So, my brothers and sisters, God loves us. And Mary, our Blessed Mother, is the loving face of God. Mary shows us the face of God’s love — in ever circumstance in our lives. Mary goes with us as our mother — we are here beloved children and she brings our needs to the attention of Jesus and urges him to help us. Mary is always referring us to Jesus, pointing to Jesus as the answer to our every question and need.

Just as we heard in today’s passage of the Gospel, she tells the servers at the wedding: *Do whatever he tells you.*

Those words are for each one of us, my brothers and sisters. Mary is calling us to turn our to Jesus in our weaknesses and burdens, in our time of trouble. She is telling us to seek the answers in him.

Because, as we know, Jesus is perfect God and perfect man, and his heart was moved with compassion for the deceased and the dying.

And then in his own suffering on the Cross, Jesus entered into our pain and suffering. And he shows that we will never be alone when we suffer.

But also, Jesus wants us to be his instruments, to be the sign of his presence in the world.

Jesus speaks to those who are sick and those who are healthy. He is calling all of us to be his instruments, to be the sign of his presence in the world.

Those who are suffering and sick have a very important role to play in God’s plan of redemption. Because they can offer their sufferings and sorrows for others. And participate in the work of redemption for the salvation of the world. They can join their sufferings to Christ’s sufferings on the cross.

And for those in good health, Jesus is calling us to reach out to those who suffer. And this has become an important Christian duty that we have in this moment in our society.

It is such an important and beautiful ministry — to go out of ourselves and especially take care of those in need, especially those who are sick.

So, today, as we gather as the family of God in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, let us ask our Blessed Mother, Health of the Sick, to bring healing and peace to all those who are sick, and may she help them to bear their sufferings with Christ.

And let us ask our Blessed Mother to inspire the healthy and strong to stand with the sick and the weak.
May she help us to serve our suffering neighbors with tenderness and affection. And through our acts of love, may we show those who are sick the nearness and love of God.

\[1\] Readings: Isa. 66:10–14c; John 2:1–11.