



April 9, 2020

A Message of Hope and Solidarity Amid the Coronavirus Pandemic

Joint Statement from Sr. Mary Haddad, president and CEO, Catholic Health Association of the United States and Sr. Donna Markham, president and CEO, Catholic Charities U.S.A

As we prepare to celebrate the joy of Easter amid the coronavirus pandemic, the Catholic Health Association of the United States and Catholic Charities USA wish to convey our prayers and the continued commitment of the Catholic ministries to all people of this nation. While churches may be closed for services this Easter, the healing work of our ministries continues.

While the COVID-19 crisis reminds us of our shared fragility, it also demonstrates how everything and everyone is truly connected. We see that the ecological order is connected to the human condition; that eradicating the pandemic in one community will never be achieved unless it is done in all communities; and that the success and safety of front-line responders are linked to our willingness to stay home. It is at this moment, when we need to stay at safe distances, that we are finally brought together as one human family standing together to build a better future.

For over 150 years, the Catholic Health Association and Catholic Charities' ministries have been steadfast in our compassionate response to those suffering from illness and need. From treating malaria and yellow fever during the earliest days of our nation, through the 1918 Pandemic, the AIDS-HIV crisis of the 1980s and now COVID-19, Catholic providers continue to be some of the first organizations treating and caring for those in need. It is through this continued effort that the Catholic health and charities' ministries continue to live out our missions in solidarity with those in need in our communities.

While our respective ministries stand with people who are poor and vulnerable during our nation's best moments, during this time of great challenge we continue to work within our local communities to provide a source of strength and support for those in need. This responsibility comes to us not as a burden, but as a renewal of faith in our mission for compassionate care.

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In light of the current situation, we renew our commitment to the values that our ministries have been dedicated to since our inception:

- Our ministries will continue to promote and defend human dignity for all in our care while advancing the common good;
- Our ministries will continue to attend to the whole person, recognizing that this pandemic affects not only our bodies, but also our minds, emotions, and spirits;
- Our ministries will continue to advocate and serve those who are vulnerable or living on the margins of society; and
- Our ministries will continue to work to ensure that in this moment of darkness nobody is forgotten.

The coming days and months will continue to bring us great trial and tribulation, but will also provide moments of hope and redemption. We see each day the pain of lost loved ones, ill-health, unemployment and economic uncertainty. However, we also see great moments of hope, grace and redemption in the dedicated and selfless work of health care workers, charities' staff, first responders and other essential workers to make our communities safer, all at a great personal sacrifice.

It is in these moments of hope, and as we celebrate Easter, that the seed of renewal is planted for enduring this time of uncertainty and building a brighter future for our entire country.

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Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA), a member of Caritas Internationalis, is the national office for the Catholic Charities ministry nationwide. CCUSA's members provide help and create hope to more than 12 million people a year regardless of religious, social, or economic backgrounds. Please visit www.catholiccharitiesusa.org for additional information.

The Catholic Health Association of the United States www.chausa.org is the national leadership organization of the Catholic health ministry, representing the largest nonprofit provider of health care services in the nation.

- 1 in 7 patients in the U.S. is cared for in a Catholic hospital each day.
- Catholic health care, which includes more than 2,200 hospitals, nursing homes, long-term care facilities, systems, sponsors, and related organizations, serves the full continuum of health care across our nation.