

National Weekly Healthcare Thanksgiving Mass for Healthcare Workers
St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham, Thursday 18th June 2020

Archbishop Bernard

The purpose of this evening's Mass is to express the gratitude of the Roman Catholic community, to healthcare workers. I am grateful to those who advise me in healthcare chaplaincy for gathering some short messages of thanks, which we shall listen to now.

From Debra Hickman.

(who is a Chief Nurse, working in North Wales)

As a nurse I have a family: fellow Nurses and fellow Healthcare workers.

Never has this family needed to be so strong and support each other,
as well as those we care for.

I have never felt alone.

Anxious – yes. Stressed – yes, but never alone
as I know my NHS family of fellow Nurses is in it with me
and also understands the mixture of emotions
this global pandemic has brought.

It's a humbling profession being a Nurse,
but never have I felt so proud to be a Nurse
and fight this battle
with the strength of unity my fellow colleagues bring.

I will fight on as a Nurse
and look back with a mixture of emotions
as this is what my training prepared me for,
even though I could never have envisaged a time like we are in now –
but I know I will look back with pride and love for my profession as a Nurse.

Thank you to all our amazing nurses.

From Fiona Safferny

(A St. John's Ambulance Volunteer)

Volunteers from the Wolverhampton and Staffordshire St John Ambulance family have been spending their Lockdown at Stafford and Royal Stoke hospitals, working alongside their NHS friends on 12-hour shifts.

I have been so blessed to witness the outpouring of love, empathy and respect for our brothers and sisters, in their time of need.

St John volunteers have been supporting patients by keeping them company, taking observations, helping with toileting, patient nutrition and cleaning.

A bit different from the usual fare of event first aid cover!

Some of us have had the very great privilege to hold the hands of the dying on their final journey and comfort those they left behind.

Thank you to all our amazing volunteers from many walks of life.

From a Hospital Chaplain in Birmingham

Thank you for witnessing to God's love and the dignity of each person, through the care that you have given in these last months. It has been a privilege to see.

Hospital chaplains are always indebted for the help of members of staff on wards.

Recently, this has been particularly true. Often, this has been given when people have been busy, tired and even anxious.

A friendly welcome, practical advice or asking a patient if they would like to see the chaplain: things easily missed but able to make a big difference.

Thank you to everyone who has helped to make that difference.

From Marie Ramsbottom

(A Senior Paediatric Nurse)

When people say: "It won't affect you! Children don't get coronavirus!"
What should I say? "Oh yes they do?"
They do but it's different.

We have had to learn as we go,
there has been uncertainty,
an added complexity to an already fearful time.
But for me there was calm.
What's my secret?
No secret, simply faith.

Prayer has played a huge role in my pandemic journey;
prayers for others and prayers for strength;
to help guide others as a team leader.

I have felt God's presence in that calm
and hope I have helped others feel it too.

My colleagues have been amazing,
pushing beyond their fears to deliver exceptional care.
The collaborative approach and heartfelt camaraderie
will not only see us through this pandemic but beyond.

I would also like to thank the faith community
for all the prayers for healthcare workers.
Knowing you are in someone's prayers is uplifting,
so please know you are also in mine.

God bless.

Thank you to all our faith communities who have helped our key workers, both spiritually and practically

Finally from Marlene

(whose husband sadly died during the height of the lockdown).

Reg loved two things above all else in life: his family and his Lord.

When Reg suffered a stroke,
during this time of Covid lockdown,
he was rushed to hospital where he would spend his final hours.

We as a family are so grateful
that the two things most important to him
were taken seriously by the staff who cared for him.

We will never forget the way that,
whilst we could not be with him physically,
the staff showed us where we could look through a window
and see that he was being well looked after
and that he was not alone.

We also valued so much
the way that staff enabled our priest,
complete in PPE,
to visit him and bring him the sacraments.

The two things so important to our Reg: sorted!
We just simply want to say thank you
for that to our amazing healthcare heroes.

We have no doubt that Reg will also be thanking them by praying for them – because that's
what Reg always did:
showered people with his love and prayers.

***Thank you to all those who have cared for other with compassion and love.
Those who mourn remain in our prayers.***

Archbishop Bernard

I thank those who provided those heartfelt messages which give us all some insight, into the
experiences that people have lived through, over these months.

We keep them and all those they mention in our prayers which we now make: