



## Jubilee Year of Hope April 2025

*Those Who Care for the Sick*

## HEROES OF HOPE

**Heroes of Hope** is a monthly newsletter from the Diocese of Hamilton, shining a light on the extraordinary individuals and ministries who inspire hope and transform lives in our communities.

### #HEROESOFHOPE

During his ministry, Jesus proclaimed the good news of God's steadfast and compassionate love **for all people**. He went about doing good and healing the sick, giving them hope in the knowledge that God had not abandoned them in their suffering. He entrusted this ministry to his disciples to be carried out for generations to come. In the Diocese of Hamilton, this ministry of care for the sick and suffering continues to be carried out by countless heroes of hope.

### Hospital Ministry

Since the arrival in Hamilton in the 1850's the **Sisters of St. Joseph**, have been instrumental in establishing hospitals and other care centres to serve the sick and poor, regardless of faith or culture, ensuring that the most vulnerable and marginalized have access to compassionate, high quality care. With Catholic hospitals in Hamilton, Kitchener, Brantford, Guelph and Dundas, the Sisters, together with doctors, nurses, medical technicians, housekeeping staff, pastoral care-givers and volunteers have carried out Jesus' ministry of care and healing, over the past 170 years. They continue to offer hope to thousands of people each day who are burdened by pain and suffering.

Other medical professionals and volunteers, many belonging to our Catholic community, are ministers of hope in the public regional hospitals and other healthcare facilities throughout the Diocese. Each in their own way carries out the mission Jesus entrusted to his disciples.



### Hospice Ministry

In the Diocese of Hamilton, dedicated medical staff and a host of volunteers, supported by generous benefactors, provide palliative care for people who have serious or life-threatening illness or disease. **Emmanuel House** in Hamilton, **Margaret's Place** in Dundas, and the **Stedman Community Hospice** in Brantford provide wholistic care for patients and their families and an alternative to MAiD for those who feel hopeless in the face of their diminishing health.



When a family brings a loved one to our hospice, it is a time of immense vulnerability for all of them. As a volunteer, the hope that I offer is mostly just "being there". I want my presence to let them know that they are not facing this special time alone. When I ask, "how is today going", I hope that the patient or family member hears my concern and my willingness to listen with compassion and without judgment.

- Maureen, Hospice volunteer.



## Sacramental Ministry



Parish priests regularly respond to calls from parishioners requesting the **Sacrament of the Sick**, when facing surgery or a serious illness, and celebrate this Sacrament with the elderly homebound who experience failing health. Through the laying on of hands and the anointing, the sick are strengthened with the grace of the Holy Spirit.

They often receive Holy Communion, the pledge of eternal life – a gift of hope. Parish priests are scheduled to be “on call” on a rotation basis at nearby hospitals to respond to medical emergencies.

In addition to the Sacrament of the Sick, priests and extraordinary ministers of Communion regularly bring the Eucharist to the sick and homebound in parishes, senior residences and hospitals. Over 3,000 homebound people regularly receive Communion, thanks to dedicated volunteer parishioners who visit them and pray with them.

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It is a privilege to bring Communion to the homebound in my parish. My fellow parishioners are so grateful for this. It is a time to let them know they are not alone during their illness. Our Lord is with them on their journey as well as the parish community through their prayers. - Linda, Extraordinary Minister of Communion

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## Community Ministry

At almost every Mass, parishioners offer petitions to God for the sick and suffering, and their families and caregivers. Prayers are offered for their strength and healing, comfort and peace. Pope Francis recently testified to the power of this prayer. During his life-threatening illness, he acknowledged with gratitude the gift of strength and hope he received from the prayers of the whole world which accompanied him.

Another form of prayerful support to the sick which takes place in some of our parishes is **Prayer Shawl Ministry**. Parishioners knit or crochet shawls and pray for the intentions of those who will receive them as they do so. The shawls are blessed and given to the sick to “clothe” them with prayers of comfort, strength and healing.



These heroes of hope continue the mission of Jesus Christ, proclaiming in action the Gospel message of hope to the sick and suffering members of our communities.



## HEROES OF HOPE PRAYER FOR THOSE WHO CARE FOR THE SICK

Lord God, by the grace of our baptism, you have given us new life in Christ and called us to serve as pilgrims of hope.

We pray in thanksgiving for those who have responded to your call to care for the sick. We praise you for the healing gifts you give to our healthcare providers: our doctors, nurses, personal support workers, pastoral care ministers and family members who accompany the sick with compassion.

Through their varied ministries, may they touch the hearts of all in our community who long for the hope, born of our Christian faith, that never disappoints.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.



**Contact your local parish to become an Extraordinary Minister of Communion or to ask about the Prayer Shawl Ministry!**

