



Jubilee Year of Hope November 2025

*For Ministers to the Dying
and Bereaved*

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

Life can be unpredictable and some situations, especially when a loved one is dying, require extra care and compassion. There are many in our Diocese who have made it their vocation to care for others during these times. These heroes of hope are there in the most vulnerable of times and help both the dying person and their family and friends to manage the unwanted situation. Their calm presence restores hope and helps everyone cope.

Palliative Care

Doctors and nurses who provide palliative care focus on relieving the symptoms and stress of serious illness. Their presence allows patients to live as fully and comfortably as possible until the end of life. They support not only those who are ill, but also the families and loved ones who share in the journey — true everyday heroes offering care and compassion when it is needed most.

“Hospice care not only helps people die with dignity, it helps them live out life with love.”

Hospice Care

Direct support is offered to many through hospice care in our Diocese. These facilities provide a peaceful environment where patients and their loved ones can feel supported and cared for. They provide a space for people to experience their end-of-life journey with dignity and comfort in a place that feels like home. These facilities, such as **Emmanuel House, Margaret's Place, Stedman Community Hospice, Chapman House** and many others are supported by volunteer heroes from our Catholic community.

Support for the Dying and their Families

Parish priests, deacons and extraordinary ministers of Communion make themselves available to bring comfort to those who are nearing the end of their earthly life. Whenever possible, they bring the sacrament of the Eucharist to those who are dying.

Priests celebrate the Anointing of the Sick, with prayer for strength and healing, and when possible, offer the “Last Rites” – *Viaticum* (Communion) food for the final journey. As the time of death approaches, priests, deacons and parish ministers may be invited to offer prayers for the dying, and at the time of death, the Church's prayer for the dead.

At the Time of Death

Priests, deacons, and lay ministers often meet with families to prepare the most appropriate way to celebrate the Church's funeral rites. These may include a first visit at the funeral home, a Prayer Vigil in the form of a Liturgy of the Word, the Funeral Mass or Liturgy of the Word, and the Internment. The importance of gathering as a community for prayer at these moments to remember and pray for the deceased is a great source of comfort and peace for grieving families.



In many of our parishes, volunteers offer support to grieving families with food donations and following the funeral liturgy, hospitality in the form of a funeral reception. In addition, prayers for the deceased continue following the funeral liturgy and Masses are offered for the deceased.

Support for Those Who Are Grieving

Grief is a natural response to loss. It's the emotional suffering people feel when something or someone they love is taken away. While loss affects people in different ways, many people find a need to find ways to help them deal with their grief.

In our Diocese, countless heroes of hope offer compassionate support to those in grief. Many parishes host the *When Life Changes* program, which combines educational guidance with a supportive group experience. Along with the Diocese, **St. Catherine of Siena Parish** in Hamilton, **St. Andrew's Parish** in Oakville and **St. Michael's Parish** in Waterloo serve as heroes of hope for the grieving.

“We can transform all of our suffering through the grace of Jesus Christ.” – *Pope Leo, XIV at the Jubilee of Consolation, Sept. 15, 2025*

Spiritual Care for the Grieving



Parish Support – Beyond formal grief programs, our parishes play a vital role in meeting the spiritual needs of those who are dying and those who mourn. Priests, deacons, lay ministers, and volunteers provide comfort and guidance in many ways, and continued pastoral care after a death. These acts of compassion, along with mourning rituals offered at the time of loss, bring solace and remind families that even in sorrow, they are not alone.



Diocesan support – Through the Family Ministry Office, the Diocese offers assistance to those caring for a loved one who is dying and to those grieving a loss. The office provides grief programs, referrals for complicated grief, and a variety of resources to support individuals and families. The office journeys, on behalf of the Diocese, with all those in need.



HEROES OF HOPE PRAYER FOR MINISTERS TO THE DYING AND BEREAVED

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 provide compassionate care for our sisters and brothers as they reach the end their earthly life, and for those who accompany us with prayer and support in our times of grief, offering us the consolation of our faith and the hope of eternal life.

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.

“For those experiencing the loss of a loved one, the emotions and the changes can often be overwhelming. Helping them to learn about grief can impact them in ways that can help them move forward through their grief. Helping others process their grief with compassion and empathy is one of the gifts God has given me.”
– *Deacon Leonard Gallant*

