

ORAL REPORT TO THE ONTARIO PROVINCIAL CONVENTION JULY 8 – 11, 2018

Our Lady, Health of the Sick

Mary was a daughter, a wife and a mother. In each of these roles she was called upon to be an 'angel of mercy' and a tower of strength, in situations of suffering and death. She was at the death bed, of both her parents, and closed their eyes in death. She was present, with Jesus, at the death of her beloved husband, Joseph. She walked every step of her son's passion, right up to his death, in love and empathy. She never uttered a bitter word, during, or after, this trauma.

The corporal works of mercy as well as the spiritual, have always been a special mark of Christianity. There was care of the sick among the civilized pagans. The old Irish, for example, had a hospital three hundred years before the coming of Christ. It was a Christian institution, *par excellence*.

In the Ottawa diocese we visited 'shut-in' council members; brought the gift of the Holy Eucharist to them and other seniors in nursing and retirement homes. Members volunteer in hospice care facilities, at cancer treatment centres and continue to volunteer, at a hospital for veterans. Members have cooked meals at a homeless drop in shelter, and escorted seniors on a bus for a shopping spree.

Our Lady loves our poor sick souls and will watch by them till the end. An old Irish poem runs - "There is no hound in fleetness nor in chase, north wind or rapid river, as quick as the Mother of Christ to the bed of death."

At this year's annual convention, our charity collection, of over \$1000, was donated to Cornerstone Housing for Women. Many councils continue to support this organization and also the following organizations who provide food, shelter and clothing for the homeless in Ottawa: the Shepherds of Good Hope, Ottawa Inner-city Ministries, St. Joseph's Women's Shelter and Chrysalis House.

In the Hail Mary we ask Mary to pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. While many are blessed with physical cures, many others receive a spiritual healing, which enables them to live with their illness, in a deep peace and serenity that they did not have before. Spiritual healing is a great blessing. It is the gift of living through illness or other difficulties, with a heart that is warm rather than cold. It helps us to be forgiving of ourselves, of others and of the unfairness of life.

Mary is an example for us in our personal struggles; she understands our struggles and is with us in them. She can teach us to grow in spiritual and emotional health in the struggles of life. She is there when we need physical or spiritual healing; when we struggle with living a Christian life. While on earth, Our Lady was ever kind to the sick. She has not ceased to help them now, that she is in heaven. Mary, health of the sick, pray for us now and at the hour of our death.

Respectfully submitted

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