

**National Catholic Health Care Week (Feb. 1-7) and
World Day of the Sick (Feb. 11)**

“At the heart of Catholic health care is a deep respect for the intrinsic value and dignity of every human being and an unwavering commitment to serving all people, from all backgrounds and faiths – especially society’s most vulnerable.” (Catholic Health Alliance of Canada)

This year from Feb. 1-7, the Catholic Women’s League of Ontario recognizes the important work of health care organizations and professionals in our province. To show our appreciation to them for their service and dedication councils are encouraged to write notes of thanks to those involved in health care and drop them off at hospitals, hospices and long-term care homes.

Councils may also wish to involve their parish community in observing the World Day of the Sick by arranging with their Pastor for the Sacrament of Anointing during a Sunday Mass or during a separate, designated liturgy (within or outside of Mass). During the month of February, a special book for the sick displayed in the Church could be displayed where parishioners could add the name of their family or friends who are sick. Remember them in the Prayers of the Faithful.

In connection with the issue of Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) we must also emphasize how critically important palliative care is for dying patients, their families and loved ones. Our palliative care professionals and volunteers bring light, hope, and comfort into very difficult life situations, both in homes and in health care facilities. Instead of providing ways to hasten death, those who serve in palliative care bring support and hope to the suffering person and to their family and friends.

Councils are encouraged to make use of the Horizons of Hope Toolkit and organize a group-based engagement according to the toolkit’s four-module program so as to sustain and renew pastoral attention on the sick, lonely and abandoned. To learn more about Horizons of Hope, its training videos, facilitator guide, social media images, and take-home resources go to <https://www.cccb.ca/faith-moral-issues/suffering-and-end-of-life/horizons-of-hope-a-toolkit-for-catholic-parishes-on-palliative-care/>

Submitted by Sue Lubowitz, OPC Service Chair