



## Roman Catholic Diocese of Victoria

### *Office of the Bishop*

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January 12, 2018

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Pope Francis has designated Sunday, February 11, 2018, as the 26th World Day of the Sick, drawing our attention to Jesus' words on the Cross to both Mary and John: "Woman, behold your son ... Behold your mother. And from that hour the disciple took her into his home" (John 19:26-27).

With these words, Pope Francis notes the maternal role of Mary for the life of the Church: she is a mother to us all, tenderly caring for both spiritual and physical needs. Mary's physical care for us, and of course the healing ministry of Jesus, can never be underplayed: they are signs of the reign of God's Kingdom announced by Jesus. In the context of the motto for this year's World Day of the Sick we also see that in that moment of death we do not witness hopelessness, but rather real hope and glory! On the Cross, Jesus does not abandon the Church and her suffering members, but rather cares deeply for us, wanting to ensure that in our suffering, we can encounter Christ, know Christ, and find real hope in the Cross.

This hope is communicated through us to the world, to all who are sick and suffering. Pope Francis acknowledges how the deep response of the Church to the sick and suffering has been a faithful sign of hope and care for those in need. This is exemplified by the Church herself who is a 'field hospital' – to use Pope Francis' image – which cares for the sick and suffering on all levels, whether spiritual or physical, in order to address them with the tender care and mercy of Jesus.

This strong tradition is not foreign to our Diocese. Through the tireless self-sacrifice of our parishioners—those who work in our Catholic and other healthcare institutions; those who visit the sick and homebound; and those who work hard to ensure no person is alone in their suffering—all these efforts serve to bring the healing ministry of Christ to those in need. I hope and pray that our efforts in these areas will bear fruit and will continue to grow.

Pope Francis also notes the ways in which the Church has been bestowed with healing power in his address for the 2018 World Day of the Sick. The power of Christ to heal, to accompany, and to strengthen, cannot be underestimated. It may not always come about in ways we imagine, but the simple act of accompaniment can do wonders for those who are finding it difficult to bear their suffering alone.

With that in mind, I wish to encourage you to sign up for our Diocesan Pastoral Care Outreach Training workshops within the Diocese. In these sessions, you will learn what it means to bring a healing ministry to others; how to work through the difficulties of suffering and pain when offering pastoral care; and more. You will be equipped with the tools necessary to tenderly touch the lives of those who are so much in need of the healing ministry of Christ.

My dear family: the pain, suffering, and sickness in our Diocese is widespread, and it is our privilege and responsibility to address these issues together. When one member of the body suffers, we all suffer; Christ calls us to respond in grace, hope, and tenderness. When we accompany others in their time of need, we bring them hope, and give them hope and strength to see and believe that they are beloved of God. Indeed, this is one of the greatest signs of hope that we as a Church can bring to people's lives: to let them know they are not alone.



It is my great hope that you will sign up for these Pastoral Care training sessions, and let that hope shine brightly in the world, through you, beloved of God.

In Communion,

Most Reverend Gary Gordon  
Bishop of Victoria

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*For continuity, we recommend that participants attend all four sessions.  
Please bring a bag lunch to each session; coffee and tea will be provided.*

	<b>Victoria</b>	<b>Cowichan Valley</b>
<b>Session 1</b> <i>The Healing Ministry of Christ</i>	<b>February 24, 2018</b> 9 am – 3 pm St. Patrick's (Oak Bay) (250) 592-7391 <a href="mailto:stpat190@telus.net">stpat190@telus.net</a>	<i>Session already held</i> You are invited to attend the Victoria session if you missed this one.
<b>Session 2</b> <i>Listening &amp; Communication and Mental Health</i>	<b>March 10, 2018</b> 9 am – 3 pm St. Patrick's (Oak Bay) (250) 592-7391 <a href="mailto:stpat190@telus.net">stpat190@telus.net</a>	<i>Session already held</i> You are invited to attend the Victoria session if you missed this one.
<b>Session 3</b> <i>The Grieving Process and Ministering to Families</i>	<b>April 14, 2018</b> 9 am – 3 pm St. Joseph the Worker (250) 479-7413 <a href="mailto:sjtwooffice@shaw.ca">sjtwooffice@shaw.ca</a>	<b>January 27, 2018</b> 9 am – 3 pm St. Mary's, Ladysmith (250) 245-3414
<b>Session 4</b> <i>Who Am I as a Pastoral Care Visitor?</i>	<b>May 26, 2018</b> 9 am – 3 pm St. Joseph the Worker (250) 479-7413 <a href="mailto:sjtwooffice@shaw.ca">sjtwooffice@shaw.ca</a>	<b>February 17, 2018</b> 9 am – 3 pm St. Mary's, Ladysmith (250) 245-3414

**Program Contact Information**

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