

12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care

“Let us not underestimate the power of so many voices united in prayer.” – Pope Francis

The Catholic Women’s League of Canada, with over 82,000 members across Canada, encourages all people of faith to join nationwide in 12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care on **May 4, 2017**. This day is designed to lead into National Hospice Palliative Care Week, May 7 to 13, 2017, (organized by the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association) as a profound witness to the sanctity of human life.



There is a pressing need for all Canadians to have greater accessibility to palliative care. This end-of-life care is true compassion. It allows individuals who are facing death to not be burdened by pain and suffering but to receive the necessary support that respects their human dignity both physically and spiritually.

Pope Francis emphasizes the need for prayer, mercy, reconciliation and compassion. “Let us not underestimate the power of so many voices united in prayer!” With one heart and voice, all people of faith are urged to focus on that power of prayer.

Meditations for the Hour

You may wish to begin each of the 12 hours of prayer with the following brief meditations.

1st hour

We pray for the children who watch a family member or friend struggle with their illness. That we will reach out and comfort them with words and actions of love. We ask our Father to lift their spirit in knowing that true happiness will come for those who suffer when they return to their Creator.

2nd hour

We pray for those who are facing the end of their earthly life and for those who care for them. In Food for the Journey, Sr. Juliana Casey, IHM, addresses the grace and courage they share. “Many dying persons are a source of wisdom and grace. Their own courage increases ours. Their dignity speaks radiantly of the image of God that we all are. ... Courage, finally, is grace. Given to us in God’s Spirit, anchored in belief in the Resurrection, courage sustains us before what will remain mystery until the end of time.”

3rd hour

Good and gracious God, who gave Jesus Christ the power to heal the sick, comfort the dying, sooth the suffering and give rest to the weary. In Your mercy, grant all caregivers the patience, love and compassion to provide strength and contentment for those approaching their final journey on earth. The day-to-day challenges that a caregiver is faced with are many. Let their eyes be open to all opportunities that surround them. Let them use them to interact and stimulate those in their care. Let them know that spending time with the dying is a blessing and a privilege, not a burden. Keep watch O Lord over all who watch, work and weep. Let Your healing power of love be the instrument that makes the earthly transition possible, prayerful and peaceful. May you know that as you care for others, God cares about you and loves you tenderly. Amen.

4th hour

We pray for all families journeying with their loved ones through terminal illness, that the support and compassion shown to them in palliative care facilities will sustain them in their grief and sorrow of loss. That hope will abide in them of God’s loving grace.

5th hour

Touching is one of our basic human senses. We touch others and others touch us in different ways. We touch others physically by putting our arms around their shoulders, hugging them or kissing them. Others touch us by the look in their eyes, by the words they speak, by the acts of charity that they do for us. Touching is a beautiful means of communication. By our touch we can communicate comfort and support. We can communicate love and affection. We can communicate a sense of unity. When the woman with the haemorrhage touched Jesus' cloak she was healed. We pray for all those who loving touch comforts those with terminal illness.

6th hour

Heavenly Father, we come to you to help us understand the trials and tribulations that others are experiencing at this time with illnesses. Give us the wisdom to understand their pain and suffering. Keep us in your loving embrace and as we share that embrace with those in pain, may we experience your strength and mercy as they also experience it. O Father, let them find happiness and fulfillment in their lives so that they may rejoice when they come into Your presence.

7th hour

We pray for those who fear the process of terminal illness. May they find in the caregivers in palliative/hospice facilities a relief of the anxiety through the knowledge and support, both physical and spiritual, given them by the staff.

8th hour

We pray for the children who will accompany their parent through the process of terminal illness. May they be sustained in their grief by the support of family, friends and medical and spiritual personnel they encounter in the palliative care process.

9th hour

We pray for all palliative care/hospice facilities that they may receive the funding needed to adequately provide the necessary care of those journeying through terminal illnesses.

10th hour

For all families, physicians, health care providers and those involved in the palliative care programs. Send forth Your Spirit to all involved in the discussions and decision-making process of those who cannot speak for themselves. We pray to the Lord.

For all doctors counselling patients. May they always be aware of the patient's feelings as well as the disease. We pray to the Lord.

For all caregivers, affirm their trust in the Lord. Rid them of all anxiety so that they can be attentive to the needs of their loved ones. We pray to the Lord.

Inspired by the Spirit, Women Respond to God's Call. May we remain united in faith, always available and obedient to carry out Your work devoting ourselves to the needs of others. We pray to the Lord.

11th hour

Eternal God, in whom mercy is endless and the treasury of compassion — inexhaustible, look kindly upon us and increase Your mercy in us, that in difficult moments we might not despair nor become despondent, but with great confidence submit ourselves to Your holy will, which is Love and Mercy itself.

12th hour

Thank You, Lord, for Your presence with us this day. As we depart from this space soon, we ask you to bless us throughout the remainder of the day and guide us safely home. Bless all who walk with someone who suffers. May Your Spirit guide them in their endeavours. We ask this in the name of Jesus, and in the power of the Holy Spirit, Amen.