

chas communiqué

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Growing Our Association

Spring. Green. Fresh. Growth. No other season ushers in energy, inspiration and playfulness like spring. Capitalizing on this annual, provincial 'breath of fresh air,' the CHAS Communique is publishing an article scribed by our veteran Board Member and CHAC Representative, Jim Schneider.

The article was written to answer the question - 'Why Belong to CHAS?' For long-standing members, this is a refresher. For newer members, it's a foundational piece espousing the strong values of Catholic health care ministry.

As a call to all members - would you help us GROW our Association? Would you pass on this newsletter and invite others to join? Would you consider a tax-deductible gift membership to someone who you think would benefit from receiving CHAS news, convention information and access to our publications and resources?

Thank-you for your support, and may you have a joy-filled Spring.

In February 2004 the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a pastoral letter entitled, *Catholic Health Ministry in Canada*. The purpose of the letter was to address all of the Christian faithful regarding the many profound changes within the health system and the church during the past few decades. The letter acknowledges with deep gratitude the courage and devotion of the nuns who loved and cared for sick, suffering and dying people regardless of color or creed. However, the Bishops note that, "unlike perhaps in the past, caring for the sick can no longer simply be the work of a few dedicated individuals; it must now become more and

more the concern and preoccupation of every Christian and the entire Christian community" (italics emphasis added).

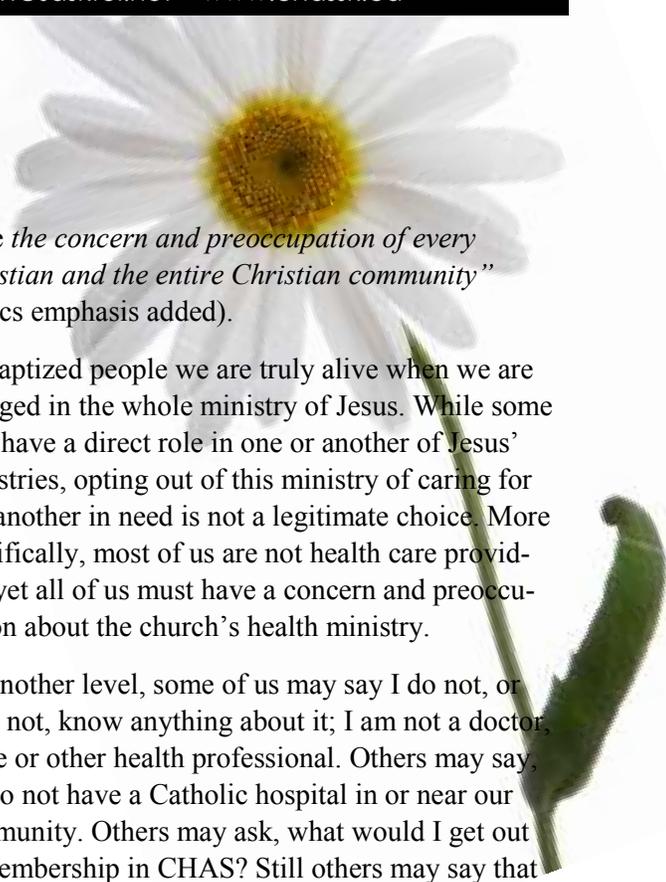
As baptized people we are truly alive when we are engaged in the whole ministry of Jesus. While some may have a direct role in one or another of Jesus' ministries, opting out of this ministry of caring for one another in need is not a legitimate choice. More specifically, most of us are not health care providers, yet all of us must have a concern and preoccupation about the church's health ministry.

On another level, some of us may say I do not, or need not, know anything about it; I am not a doctor, nurse or other health professional. Others may say, we do not have a Catholic hospital in or near our community. Others may ask, what would I get out of membership in CHAS? Still others may say that the church should not run hospitals; or, there is no difference between surgery and treatment in a Catholic run hospital or a publicly run hospital.

In response to these objections, consider the following valuable reasons for a strong, vibrant Catholic health sector. Catholic health must have a supportive community that legitimizes these values.

Consider these:

-  Catholic health differentiates the **way** we experience care and compassion in our encounters with the health system.
-  Catholic health is motivated by the compassion of Jesus and witnesses to all people on God's behalf, giving the poor (the sick, suffering and



Growing Our Association con't

dying) hope regardless of one's physical condition.

 The charism of the nuns was in taking great risk caring for the poor; now the larger Christian community is called upon to help minister and express partiality for these poor.

 Catholic health care is totally committed to respect for human life at all times. The Catholic health identity is its witness to the value of all human life regardless of the weaknesses of the person and regardless of the difficulties encountered while witnessing to human life.

 Catholic health helps everyone to understand the mystery of suffering in the human condition. We open eyes to see the necessary humiliation of Good Friday to experience the glory of Easter Sunday.

 Catholic health gives courage to deepen the human character in unavoidable suffering.

Catholic health illuminates the redemptive value of suffering in a culture that strives to avoid it, deny its reality, or respond to it with anger or violence.

 Much of Jesus' ministry was directed to care and compassion for the poor (again, the sick, suffering and dying). He specifically commanded his followers to do so, and He said that it will be the test question on our judgement day. He will not single out health care providers for the question.

65th Annual Convention

bridging healing communities

october 24 - 26, 2008

delta bessborough hotel, saskatoon

As our mission broadens to engage not only our facility members, but parishes and the public in the important ministry of Catholic health care, this weekend convention endeavors to be inclusive of the larger faith community that identifies with the healing ministry of Jesus.

Pat Lenon - public lecturer
internationally-known speaker with L'Arche

Megan McKenna - keynote address
story-teller, teacher, and prolific author

Serge LeClerc - inspirational speaker

Archbishop Sylvain Lavoie
presiding and preaching at the Mass and
Anointing of the Sick Ceremony
on Sunday morning

World Day of the Sick

On this day those who are ill were encouraged to reflect on the Christian meaning of suffering and to recall God's health-giving presence. We are also reminded that God often heals and restores life in unexpected ways.

The day is also meant to recognize the importance of those who care for the sick and elderly, whether in a health care facility or at home. Catholic health care facilities have a unique role in witnessing to this ministry.

Thank-you to all those who celebrated and remembered the sick, the suffering and the dying on the World Day of the Sick, February 11, 2008.

Our Condolences

Condolences to the family and many friends of Sister Alphonsus, who spent 20 years in Radville caring for the sick and suffering in the Hospital from 1947 - 1967. She returned again in 1982 until 1993 taking the position as Pastoral Care Coordinator for the Radville Marian Health Centre. She also did much Pastoral Care work in the community.

Sister Alphonsus then went on to Santa Maria Seniors Home in Regina until 1998. From there, she returned to the Mother-house in Pembroke, Ontario, until her passing on December 8, 2007 in her 68th year of Religious life.

A Memorial Mass in her honor was held at Holy Family Parish in Radville on Monday, January 14th, 2008.