

How much suffering did this cause him?

Being rejected by the establishment, he suffered and suffered death. As we enter into his suffering, may we enter his victory and resurrection at Easter.

I wish to reflect the last sentence from today's Gospel: "the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe in the Gospel"—believe in the Gospel. What is the Gospel? It is the good news that Jesus shared with his disciples and followers 2000 years ago. Did it have meaning for two sisters 116 years ago? Does it have meaning for us now? I believe it did, and still does. These words give us strength and meaning in this present age.

On July 17, 1884 two Franciscan Sisters arrived in Cleveland from Lafayette, Indiana with the clothes on their backs and two dollars between them. After arriving at the train station, they were met by a Franciscan Priest and escorted to a small house at the corner of Broadway and McBride, formerly occupied by the Poor Clare Sisters. In this building they were to establish St. Alexis Hospital. The area was rather poor with the majority of the residents being recently arrived immigrants from Central Europe.

To save money on soap, the Sisters mixed sand with the soapy waters when washing the floors.

Once they walked 7 miles to receive a monetary donation of \$1.00 and they walked back in order to keep the one dollar bill intact.

At the celebration commemorating 25 years in 1909, the main speaker was Dr. George Crile who later on started up the Cleveland Clinic. He described the charity work done at St. Alexis Hospital. In its first year, 25 patients were cared for, all were charity cases. Up to 1909, 20,400 patients had been treated and of those, 15,021 were charity cases and only 1,003 had paid full rates. All creeds and nationalities were admitted on an equal basis. In 1902, of the 2,300 patients treated, Catholics accounted for less than one-fourth. The history of this hospital is rooted in charity care given to people of all races and all religious backgrounds.

In 1906, Dr. Crile performed the first human to human blood transfusion in the world. One of the Miller brothers who lived locally was dying because of a great loss of blood. With crude instruments, Dr. Crile did a direct transfusion from one brother to the other and a life was saved. It is ironic that the Cleveland Clinic which was founded by Dr. Crile wants to terminate the life blood of Saint Michael Hospital.

The Gospel is about what Jesus said and did. He spent his time with the poor, minis-

tering to their needs. Saint Michael Hospital has a history of 116 years healing the sick, primarily the poor and rejected.

Jesus restored sight to the blind. How many patients have had their sight restored with the many cataract operations. Jesus raised persons from the dead. How many times have patients been resuscitated from the dead when their heart stopped beating and have been brought back to life. Being close to the hospital is an important factor in these situations.

Jesus healed leprosy, an infection. How many times have patients had their severe infections treated at Saint Michael. Jesus reconciled many in healing their broken relationship with their God. How many times have patients of different faiths been reconciled with their God through the presence of a full-time, 24 hours a day, seven days a week Pastoral Care Department.

The Sisters have maintained the Catholic presence during these years. PHS committed itself in 1994 to maintain this same presence and in 1998 the Bishop of Cleveland proclaimed Saint Michael a Catholic hospital even though it was a for-profit hospital run by lay men.

Jesus ran into opposition from the Scribes and Pharisees because of his commitment to the poor, alienated and ill of varied cultures. This caused Him much suffering. The Pharisees wore fancy robes, wanted the best seats at banquets and always wanted to be above the rest of the people. We have a wealthy hospital who calls itself world class, who wishes to express its power to control healthcare in Cleveland, causing us much suffering because it wishes to eliminate us and leave this community without a hospital.

Lent did not begin for this community on Ash Wednesday. It began last Monday, March 6, 2000 when it was announced that a wealthy hospital was buying and closing us down. Those who attended the rally at Our Lady of Lourdes last Monday, those continuing their efforts to resist closure, namely political leaders, the clergy who support the people with their presence—all of these are living out the Gospel, living out the words and deeds of Jesus, are suffering with Jesus as he suffered.

I wish to close by reading a passage from the 25th chapter from the Gospel of Matthew: "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me. I was ill and you com-

forted and healed me, in prison and you came to visit me." Then they will ask him, "Lord when did we see you hungry and feed you, or see you thirsty and give you drink?" "When did we welcome you away from home or clothe you in your nakedness?" "When did we visit you when you were ill or in prison?" He will answer: "I assure you, as often as you did it for my least sisters or brothers, you did it for me."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CHARLES A. GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 4, 2000

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 96 and rollcall No. 97, I was unavoidably away on official business. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes" on both.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 4, 2000

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, on April 3, 2000, I was unable to be in Washington and, consequently, missed two votes.

Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on rollcall No. 96 and "aye" on rollcall No. 97.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 4, 2000

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall Numbers 96 and 97, I was unavoidably detained in my Congressional district. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on both measures.