

12th January 2021

Health

“While we were discussing what could make one happy, I said to him:

Sanitas sanitatum et omnia sanitas.

[Health of healths and everything is health.]”

Gilles Ménage, from a conversation with Jean-Louis Guez de Balzac

It's been distressing to see images in recent days of front-line healthcare staff nearly at breaking point as they try to hold back a tsunami of Coronavirus hospital cases. “On our knees”; “Unprecedented pressure”; “Close to being overwhelmed”; “A state of emergency”. These are the cries we've heard. We are blessed with an amazing Health Service. We are blessed with remarkable staff dedicated to our welfare. So today, and, I hope, every day, we thank God for all those who care for our health.

But health is more than our physical wellbeing. It's about our state of mind, stable emotions, spiritual nurture. It's about housing, safety, provision of food, education, opportunity, reaching our potential, faith and wholeness. To paraphrase Gilles Ménage, a French 17th century scholar, health is everything and everything is health. So today, and, I hope, every day, we thank God for all those who care for *all aspects* of our health.

But there's more ... Health isn't just about the welfare of individuals. It's about communities and nations, the environment we live in and the future of our planet. What do I gain when *my* wellbeing is secured and my community remains impoverished? What does my country gain when it is carefully safeguarded while oceans are being polluted and the natural environment is destroyed across the world? So today and, I hope, every day, we thank God for all those who build better communities, who are engaged in ecological conservation and who work for our planet's health.

Sanitas sanitatum et omnia sanitas. If “everything is health”, I hope today you are healthy. And if you're not, I hope you find people around you who are concerned for your health. And I hope that we can play our part in keeping everyone healthy – individuals, communities and our world – in whatever way, for the health of all.

A prayer for today

*Spirit of the Living God, present with me now, enter me, body, mind and spirit,
and heal me of all that harms me. In Jesus' name. Amen*

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