

Summary

John Paul II (1920-2005) repeatedly confessed that the sick are especially close and dear to his heart. This is why he perceives them in a holistic and in-depth way. He talks both about the sick themselves, irrespective of where they are, and about those who take care of them. The Pope believes that Christ is present in suffering people in a special way, and this is the reason why the sick constitute a unique community – *the Church of suffering*. And in that very Church of suffering, Christ is hailed and present in a special way. A Christian always lives in the closeness of the Cross. This one reality – *human suffering* undergoes a profound change even more in the lives of the sick, and this is done through the Cross. This is the reason why the sick are invaluable, they unveil the mystery and power of the Cross anew and they also complete Christ's act of redemption. This is precisely *the Gospel of the Cross*. According to John Paul II, all suffering presents a great value when it is accepted in the spirit of love towards one's fellowman. This happens when suffering and physically weak people become the source of strength for the healthy. The Pope repeatedly asked the sick not to forget about him. He also thanked all those who take care of the sick, and so all those in the health-care services: doctors and nurses; but also those who help them out of pure eagerness, out of love of one's fellowman, or out of humanism. According to him, hands, minds and hearts of those serving and helping the sick are always blessed.