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**PRAY WITH ME**

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Lord God,  
in your great love for us you became  
vulnerable to the cross of suffering.  
Help us to experience the enormity  
of your love.  
Transform us into a people capable of  
sharing the power of your weakness,  
so that our community and world may  
become comfortable with compassion.  
We ask this in your holy and precious name.

**AMEN.**



**HOLY WEEK**



**“Christ Jesus, though he  
was in the form of God,  
did not regard equality with God  
something to be grasped.  
Rather, he emptied himself, taking  
the form of a slave,  
coming in human likeness and found  
human in appearance,  
he humbled himself, becoming obedient  
to the point of death, even death  
on a cross.”**

PHILIPPIANS 2:6-8



## Emptying out of what we cling to as our “self” is built into the very dynamic of life.

Consider the seed that gives way to the mature plant, the parent bird that feigns injury and risks death to draw a predator away from its young, the human parent who will sacrifice most anything to ensure their children’s lives and well-being.

Holy Week witnesses to this truth — only in dying to ourselves, our ego and worldly expectations do we truly live. The week opens with the solemn proclamation of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ. Jesus’ journey to the cross was a journey into an unfathomable vulnerability. In Christ, the God who possesses all power imaginable gave up all divine claims and became defenseless in the face of human brokenness and cruelty.

The deep mystery of our lives can only be grasped through a way of life that offers this kind of vulnerability to others. This is hard to understand and even harder to live. Culturally, we are all about filling up, not emptying out. We harbor an acquisitiveness deep in our souls that is greedy about most everything, even the coveted experiences we call our “bucket list.” Like Jesus’ disciples, we find the way of vulnerability and weakness foreign. It is only possible in the full light that the resurrection casts on all that came before and all that is to come.

The mystery of Jesus’ self-emptying life speaks to the deepest law of life itself. We, like everything else, are on this path of giving over to others, and this giving over is the only way to get ourselves back — our true selves, the selves made for love. Through seeming weakness and vulnerability this self overcomes those dark places in our lives and helps transform the world into God’s garden place.

This is why Catholic health care is such a remarkable

environment in which to work. Daily we are placed in the midst of those living this mystery of vulnerability in such an unmistakable way. Stripped of all that is familiar and self-sufficient, our patients and their families struggle to embrace their dependence and need. They speak deeply to the human condition we all share and are called to accept in order to live in a new way. And we are the privileged companions in this great learning from one another, those who need and those who are needed.

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### FOR REFLECTION

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*“I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me . . . ,  
for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.”*

(2 Cor. 12:10)

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- ◇ Is there a spiritual practice you began this Lent that needs renewed commitment in this final week?
- ◇ Do you often shield yourself from feeling your patients’ suffering? Let some of that vulnerability seep in and help you remain grounded in compassion.
- ◇ Who is the friend in your life you can be most vulnerable with? Thank them for this.