

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