

A Reflection for Nurses Week



The Catholic Health Association honors all nurses for their decision and dedication to serve others in a ministry of deep compassion, human connections and remarkable expertise. We invite you to join with Jean deBlois in reflecting on your own history as a nurse. We encourage you to write your history, to reflect on it and to share it with others.

Reflection for Nurses Week

A long time ago when I was in my early 20s, I was searching for a way to make my life mean something. I was never a committed or dedicated student, had little interest in anything other than having fun and certainly never considered entering a “profession” where service to others was the focus. But for some unknown reason I decided to go to nursing school. I graduated in 1967 and my RN license arrived in the mail about 8 weeks after I took the state board examination.

From that moment on I found myself immersed in doing things for people in need that I never thought I could or would do. I worked as a visiting nurse going in and out of “single room occupancy” old hotels in San Francisco caring for poor, sick, and dying people. I moved on to work in an acute care hospital where I cared for people ... young and old, seriously and chronically ill persons and those who were not really sick at all. Remember, in the 70s people stayed “in hospital” for relatively minor illnesses because “it was covered” by insurance. I worked in a Public Health Clinic in Los Angeles that cared mostly for gay men in the midst of the AIDS epidemic. Then I moved into an acute care setting and finally to intensive care. Again, this was in the late 1970s and early 1980s when ICU was a new concept and we trained LA Firemen... now known as Paramedics ... to go “out in the field” and treat people who had heart attacks, were the victims of violence and car crashes ... and bring them to the ICU that by that time I supervised. I was no more than 29 years old!

I left nursing in the early 1980s to study theology and ethics with the hope of bringing some wisdom to my nursing ministry. I think about my “nursing days” with great affection.

As we celebrate Nurses Week let me offer this brief reflection for all nurses and especially those who serve in the ministry of Catholic Health Care:

Jesus, you are the Healer
who calls all nurses to serve and to care for people in your name.
As we carry out this holy ministry, be with us,
bless us with the wisdom of your Holy Spirit
and fill us with the compassion
that allows us to put the needs of those we serve before all else.
In the midst of this highly technological and often impersonal age
let us not forget that nursing is fundamentally about *being with* people in need.
It is about touch ... a listening presence ... a willing and compassionate heart
that sees beyond symptoms and signs of illness
to a person in need and to their community of concern.
Help us to embrace the charism that is nursing ... to make it our own
and in so doing to bring your healing presence into the lives of people in need.
In your holy name we pray.
Amen.

- Jean deBlois, CSJ