



CNS
Pope John Paul II embraces the daughter of Chilean soccer star Marcelo Salas during a general audience at the Vatican Feb. 7.

Pope thanks the sick for witness

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — When those who are ill or infirm trust completely in God's care, they proclaim to the world that life is always worth living, Pope John Paul II said.

Greeting the sick, aged and people with handicaps Feb. 11, the pope thanked them for their "silent mission in the church" and witness to the world.

Hundreds of sick people, health care workers and volunteers attended an afternoon Mass in St. Peter's Basilica Feb. 11, the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, which the Catholic Church marks as the World Day of the Sick.

"Living your situation with faith, you testify that God is near," the 80-year-old

pope told pilgrims after the Mass. "Sickness and death are not realities to flee or to criticize as useless, but are both stages of a journey," he said.

Earlier in the day, the pope said too many of the world's people have no access to basic health care.

"This is a serious injustice," he said. All people of good will, but especially political and economic leaders, are called to work to ensure the situation is corrected, he said.

Pope John Paul offered thanks on behalf of the whole church to the members of religious orders and to lay people who provide health care "in the poorest countries, in the midst of diffi-

culties and conflicts, even risking their lives to save the lives of their brothers and sisters."

In a message to an international gathering in Sydney, Australia, sponsored by the Pontifical Council for Health Care Workers, the pope said that the church needs to focus new attention on the field of health care, he said.

"Not only is health care facing unprecedented economic pressures and legal complexities, but at times there is also an ethical uncertainty which tends to obscure what have always been its clear moral foundations," the pope wrote.



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Andrea Dixon/Staff photographer

Jessie Coleman, 37, (left) donated bone marrow to keep her sister Roberta Jindrak, 45, alive.

Sisters grateful for life

Twenty years ago 16-year-old Jessie Coleman (then Speen) was crushed in a car accident. Her injuries were expected to kill her. But last year, Coleman, a wife and mother, was able to save her older sister's life.

Roberta Jindrak had one of the worst kinds of bone marrow cancer, myelodysplastic syndrome refractory anemia with excess blasts. For months she underwent chemotherapy in Auburn. She was told she had a year, maybe less, to live unless she could have a bone marrow transplant.

That is where Coleman came in. Her bone marrow was the perfect match.

"It's like God let her live to save my life," Jindrak said. "It's almost like a miracle story when you think about it."

Diagnosed in September 1999, Jindrak

learned that her bone marrow was no longer making healthy blood cells. Also, she was showing signs of developing leukemia.

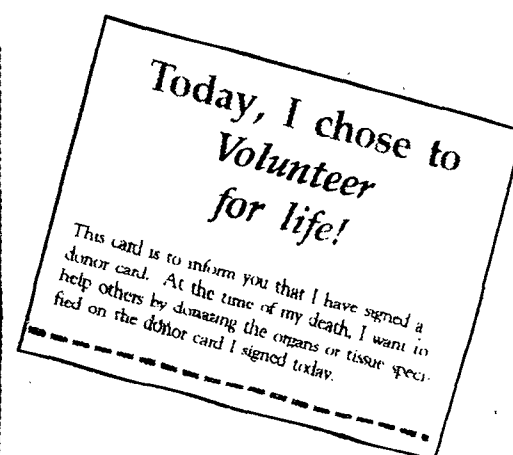
She received her first transplant of bone marrow stem cells from her sister in January 2000 at Strong Memorial Hospital. But it failed, as tests in early April showed.

On Good Friday, April 21, last year Jindrak went in for a second transplant of her sister's stem cells, which the hospital had preserved by freezing.

"I said, 'Oh jeez, God, another transplant,'" she said. "I asked a nurse, 'Is this all in vain?' And she said, 'No, this is going to work.'"

Everywhere she turned she received only encouragement, she remembered. In her

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Organ donations an 'act of love'

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

You have freed me from the dialysis machine which wore my body down to weakness. I am lucky. I never dreamed about receiving a kidney, let alone a pancreas, too!

I think about your sacrifice many times throughout each and every day. I tell everyone I know my story and your story. I think about your loved one who has passed on, hundreds of times each day. The thought of him is always with me. You need to believe and know in your heart he is keeping me alive and I am keeping him alive. I am grateful we came into each other's lives.

All my friends and family say you have done something truly religious — and you have. I will never forget your generosity.

These are excerpts from a letter Ellen and Steve Karnisky received last August. Although they've never learned the writer's identity, they say the letter has provided comfort in a time of tragedy. The writer received organs taken from the body of the Karniskys' late son, Rich.

In June 2000, Rich Karnisky was seriously injured in a drunken-driving accident in which he was a passenger. He was put on life support at Strong Memorial Hospital, and when it became apparent that he wouldn't survive the accident, Rich's

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STORY BY KATHLEEN SCHWAR