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CNS documentary service

Reflection as U.S. Marks 500,000 Deaths From COVID-19

Cardinal Cupich

As the U.S. death toll from the COVID-19 pandemic exceeded 500,000 Feb. 22, Cardinal Blase J. Cupich of Chicago urged Catholics to transform their "dismay and fear into action" with prayer and by doing one thing each day in memory of the victims. Among the actions he suggested were calling someone living alone, volunteering for an organization aiding those affected by the pandemic and "doing our part to break the back of this contagion" by wearing a mask, social distancing and getting the COVID-19 vaccine. "Do not let a day go by without a prayer of remembrance

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for the millions across the globe already lost, and a prayer of gratitude for your life, all the while making a promise to live it with greater integrity and honor," the cardinal added. His statement follows.

those who keep such statistics have confirmed the U.S. death toll from the COVID-19 pandemic has reached 500,000. The true number is surely higher, making all of this too difficult to comprehend. We would do better imagining those lost as individual human beings, a mother, a father, a brother, a sister, a daughter, a son, each connected to many others who suffer the heartache of their passing.

How can we help those left behind cope with their grief? How can we transform our own dismay and fear into action?

First, we turn to God, our creator, the one who is always with us, the one who inspires discovery in those seeking preventives and treatments, the one who stirs compassion in those who heal, teach and feed their neighbors and the one who comforts the bereaved by walking alongside them in silence to bear their pain.

Yet we need to complete our prayer with bold action. So let us do one thing each day in memory of these pandemic victims. Call someone living in isolation. Support and volunteer at organizations that feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, protect the vulnerable and visit the imprisoned. Honor these members of our human family and

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