

## The Friends of St. John the Caregiver is . . .

An international Catholic organization addressing the growing needs of family caregivers by providing:

- ▶ spirituality, information and resources to individual caregivers

[www.YourAgingParent.com](http://www.YourAgingParent.com)

- ▶ training and educational material to dioceses and parishes

[www.CatholicCaregivers.com](http://www.CatholicCaregivers.com)

- ▶ a membership association\* offering spiritual support for:

- ♥those who need care
- ♥those who give care
- ♥those who assist others giving care

[www.FSJC.org](http://www.FSJC.org)

The Friends of St. John the Caregiver firmly believes:

***Caregiving is pro-life!***

*\*No membership dues! No meetings!  
All we ask is that you pray for family caregivers  
and those receiving care.  
Donations greatly appreciated.*

### St. John the Caregiver

“When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, ‘Woman, behold your son.’ Then he said to the disciple, ‘Behold, your mother.’ And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.”

--John 19:26-27

Who better to be the patron saint of caregivers than the one Christ chose from the cross for his own mother?

***St. John,  
patron of caregivers,  
pray for us.***

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Visit [www.YourAgingParent.com](http://www.YourAgingParent.com) to download a free copy of “The Basics of Catholic Caregiving.”

Looking for information to give to the caregivers in your diocese or parish? Check out the free fliers and bulletin briefs at [www.CatholicCaregivers.com](http://www.CatholicCaregivers.com).

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## ***Friends of St. John the Caregiver***

The model for the **Friends of St. John the Caregiver**, and the ministry it provides within a family, parish and diocese, is the scene that's found at the foot of the cross. Here are:

### ***Our Lady in Need***

At the foot of the cross, she is "Our Lady in Need." A widow who is losing her only child, she has no one primarily responsible for taking care of her in her later years. From the cross, so close to death, Our Lord asks St. John to meet that need. And he asks his mother to accept John's help.

In every parish, there are those who – because of poor health, a chronic condition, or the frailty of age – are in need. Today Our Lord asks others to be caregivers. And he asks those needing help to accept it.

To acknowledge the need for care and to graciously accept it is to imitate Our Lady in Need.

And just as Mary remained a part of that new community and prayed with and for its members (she was there when the Holy Spirit descended upon those in the upper room on Pentecost [Acts 1:13-14; 2:1-4]), so too is one receiving care a precious member of the parish.

### ***St. John the Caregiver***

How did John come to receive the assignment of taking care of Jesus' mother? He was *there*.

Of all the apostles, only John walked the road to Calvary and stood beside Mary at the foot of the cross.

Because we're so familiar with that scene, it can be hard to imagine John's being absent. But what if he hadn't been? To whom would Jesus have entrusted his mother?

Then, and now, a caregiver is someone who is *there*. It's someone who is present in the sense of concern and service even when – because of living in a different part of the

city, state or country – he or she can't be physically present.

It's someone who accepts responsibility despite the fact that the conditions seem overwhelming and the future so uncertain... and alarming. Despite having so many doubts about his or her own abilities to provide the care that's needed now. So many fears about what may be asked of him or her in the future.

Now asked by Jesus to take care of Our Lord's beloved brother or sister, the imitator of St. John the Caregiver says yes.

### ***The Faithful Followers of Christ***

The Gospel of John tells us that, in addition to Our Lady and the apostle, other disciples were there, too.

Within a family, within a parish, within a diocese, there are men and women who are not the person needing care, who are not the primary caregivers, but who are called to be of service to both. How, and to what degree, varies. Within this group are family members, friends, volunteers and professionals.

Some offer service and support one-on-one. Others promote both awareness and care within the parish. Still others, in their capacity as diocesan employees, are in a unique and critical position to do the same on a regional or even national level.

### ***Who Are We Today?***

Over a lifetime, who we are at the foot of the cross will vary. Sometimes we will be the one providing care. At other times, we will be the one helping someone who offers care. And, at still other times, we will be the one in need of care.

No matter which vocation God is calling us to at a particular time in our life, no matter the challenges it brings, we are never there alone.

At the foot of the cross, we are with Jesus. □

### **Who are members of the Friends of St. John the Caregiver?**

Caregivers. Those receiving their care. Persons providing service and support to the elderly, their families, and their caregivers. Each plays a key spiritual role

### **Are there any costs, dues or meetings?**

No. No. And no.

### **Why do you offer membership?**

It's a way for people to join together and give and receive support. To become the "two or three gathered in my name" (Matthew 18:20).

### **Why should I become a member?**

To be among that community of prayer and support.

### **Is membership open to ordained, religious and laity?**

Yes.

### **What are a member's obligations?**

1. Pray for caregivers.
2. Promote care for caregivers.

### **How do I become a member?**

There's an online form at our Web site or you can send a note to the address below.

### **Can I sign up someone else?**

Yes, but only with that person's permission, please.

### **What do I get with my membership?**

You can choose to receive a caregiver's prayer book and a quarterly newsletter. Both are free.

### **Does the Friends of St. John the Caregiver sell, rent or give away its membership list?**

No.

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