

A Litany of Prayer for the Uninsured and Under-Insuredⁱ

Reader #1: We are the millions of men and women in our national community who—for a variety of reasons: downsizing, outsourcing, restructuring—will wake up one day this year to learn that we no longer have a job. Added to the stress of finding a new job, we'll also have to figure out how to continue to provide health care for our families. If we are fortunate to have health insurance, we will be faced with paying more at a time when we are trying to make do with less.

Response: "You are or have been one of us. We know or have known others. We care for you and we pray for you, remembering that we are all brothers and sisters." (Moment of silence)

Reader #2: We are the 4 million people in our national community who will celebrate a 19th birthday this next year. As we blow out the candles on the cake, we may be marking the loss of our health insurance. Our society will ensure that if we call the fire department, someone will respond. It will not offer us the same guarantee for our health.

Response: "You are or have been one of us. We know or have known others. We care for you and we pray for you, remembering that we are all brothers and sisters." (Moment of silence)

Reader #3: We are the 5 million children in our national community whose lack of health insurance sets up a barrier to good health. We are children in a nation that works to make sure we each have a basic education. We are children in a nation which ignores that we need a similar guarantee for health care.

Response: "You are or have been one of us. We know or have known others. We care for you and we pray for you, remembering that we are all brothers and sisters." (Moment of silence)

Reader #4: We are the 30 million workers between the ages of 18 and 64 who earn less than \$9 an hour. Those of us who work full-time earn \$18,800 a year. Many of us are the store clerks, mechanics, dry cleaners, and restaurant workers you meet. Our nation relies on our work to keep American humming along. We typically have no health insurance. We make too much to get health care from public health programs. We often end up in emergency rooms for care because we have no other place to go.

Response: "You are or have been one of us. We know or have known others. We care for you and we pray for you, remembering that we are all brothers and sisters." (Moment of silence)

(over)

Reader #5: We are the owners of small businesses, those businesses with less than 100 workers. We employ 38 million people in communities across the country. We support the local little league team and sponsor civic events. Because of the high cost, we often are unable to provide the protection of health insurance for our employees.

Response: "You are or have been one of us. We know or have known others. We care for you and we pray for you, remembering that we are all brothers and sisters." (Moment of silence)

Reader #6: We are the six of every 10 people in the United States who are lucky enough to have jobs that offer health insurance for our families. And yet, each year, we find that we are paying more. Deductibles and co-payments keep going up. More and more things are not covered by our insurance, which means we have to pay for them. As a result, many of us—people who own homes, who had full-time employment and insurance before getting ill—will declare bankruptcy because of our medical bills.

Response: "You are or have been one of us. We know or have known others. We care for you and we pray for you, remembering that we are all brothers and sisters." (Moment of silence)

Reader #7: We are the 18,000 people who will die this year because we do not have the security of health care that comes with having insurance. Out of pride, out of shame, out of fear – or because we simply don't have the money to go to the doctor – we will ignore signs that our health may be in jeopardy. If we do get medical attention it will be too late.

Response: "You are or have been one of us. We know or have known others. We care for you and we pray for you, remembering that we are all brothers and sisters." (Moment of silence)

Reader #8: We are the uncounted millions for whom preventive health care and a healthy lifestyle are a struggle. We live in the inner city where fresh fruit and vegetables are not available in our markets. We live in rural communities with no doctors. The color of our skin or our gender disproportionately impacts the diagnosis and treatment of a medical condition.

Response: "You are or have been one of us. We know or have known others. We care for you and we pray for you, remembering that we are all brothers and sisters." (Moment of silence)

ⁱ Adapted from "Readings from the Uninsured" in "Vision and Voice: Faithful Citizens and Health Care," Session 1, accessed at <www.visionandvoice.org> Permission granted for printing with this citation.