

*Opening Prayer for Saint John's Hospice 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala*

*April 18, 2024*

Let us listen once again to the words of Our Lord Jesus:

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right, Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me. Then the righteous will answer him and say, Lord when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you? And the king will say to them in reply, Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers or sisters of mine, you did for me.

We come to you tonight, Lord, to give thanks. We give thanks for all those laborers who through these past 60 years took your words to heart. The fruits of their labor, generosity and love continue to be experienced by all of us tonight. Thank you for all the ways in which the efforts of so many people, those here among us and those who have returned to you, have reminded us that you are in our midst. We come to you also tonight, Lord, to ask your continued blessings upon us and upon all those who are part of the Saint John's Hospice Community. Each of us, in our own unique way, are called to be living reflections of your eternal and continued love and goodness.

Bless the residents and staff of Saint John's Hospice that through their goodness, the warmth of your care and compassion may be embodied daily in a special and dynamic way at 12<sup>th</sup> and Race Streets. Bless our benefactors, that in their goodness and generosity they may know that they too are embodying your unconditional and selfless love. And bless those who will come after us, that they may be inspired by all of our labors and love to continue living out your timeless Gospel words in their own time and day. In our shared gratitude and resolve to be of service to you and to one another, may we celebrate tonight your presence in all of us so that we may be emboldened to go forth from here, renewed in our desire to love you and serve you in all those we meet. We ask all of this through Christ our Risen Lord. Amen.