**A Prayer for Hope**

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus speaks of the call to serve others in these words: "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me." Today we ask God's blessing on our work in health care ministry, that we may faithfully serve the persons who come to us for care. We pray for hope and faith to strengthen us to meet the challenges of our time. Above all, we pray in the hope that we may serve as Jesus served, with love and compassion for those on the margins of society.

Let us now consider the words of the first president of Czechoslovakia after the fall of the Communist regime …

"Either we have hope within us or we don't. It is a dimension of the soul, and it is not particularly dependent upon some observation of the world. It is an orientation of the spirit, and of the heart. It transcends the world that is immediately experienced and is anchored somewhere beyond horizons. Hope is a deep and powerful sense and it is not the same as joy that things are going well or the willingness to invest in opportunities which are obviously headed for success. But rather, it is an ability to work for something because you believe in it. Hope is definitely not the same thing as optimism. It is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that it makes sense regardless of results. It is hope, above all, which gives us the strength to live and to continually try new things."

* From Vaclav Havel's (Czech dramatist, writer and human rights activist) Disturbing the Peace: A Conversation with Karel Huizdala

(translation by Paul Wilson)

And so we pray …

O God, in whose image we all are made, give us hope that through the work of our hands, and with Jesus as our model, we may glorify you now and always. Amen.