

Chaplain Chad's September Reflection

The Catholic Church dedicates September to **Our Lady of Sorrows**, inviting us to contemplate Mary's steadfast love in the presence of suffering. Honored especially on September 15, this devotion draws our attention to Mary standing at the foot of the Cross—not turning away, not abandoning hope, but remaining close in faithful love. Her witness reminds us that compassion is not passive. It is courageous presence.



For the Maristhill community, Mary's witness speaks directly to our daily mission. In healthcare and senior living, joy and sorrow often stand side by side. We celebrate recoveries, milestones, laughter, family visits, and cherished moments of connection. We also accompany residents, families, and one another through illness, uncertainty, grief, and loss. Mary teaches us that care is not always measured by what we can fix. Sometimes its deepest expression is found in listening gently, remaining near, and assuring another person: *you do not walk alone*.

This ministry of accompaniment is at the heart of Covenant Health's mission and Maristhill's spirit of service. Whether we are caregivers, residents, volunteers, family members, leaders, or support staff, each of us can become a quiet sign of God's love. A kind word at the right moment, a patient conversation, a gentle touch, a prayer offered silently, or simply sitting with someone in stillness can become a profound act of healing. These small gestures help build a community where every person is seen, valued, and held with dignity.



September also invites us into the spiritual work of repentance and renewal. In the Christian tradition, sorrow is never meant to have the final word. When held in faith, sorrow can open the heart to mercy, soften what has grown rigid, and lead us toward healing and reconciliation. Mary's sorrows did not end in despair; they led, through trust and perseverance, toward the hope of the Resurrection. Her life teaches us that even in difficult seasons, grace is quietly at work.

This theme also resonates with the Jewish High Holy Days observed in September. **Rosh Hashanah**, the Jewish New Year, begins at sundown on September 11 and continues through September 13. It opens a sacred season of reflection, return, and hope. **Yom Kippur**, observed from sundown September 20 through nightfall September 21, is a solemn day of atonement, forgiveness, and reconciliation. Together, these holy days remind us that the longing to begin again, to repair relationships, and to seek mercy is deeply human and profoundly sacred.



Across traditions, September becomes a season of honest reflection and renewed compassion. We are invited to ask: Where do I need healing? Whom am I called to forgive? Where can I offer presence instead of judgment, patience instead of haste, hope instead of discouragement? These questions are not abstract. They shape the way we greet one another in hallways, respond to stress, care for residents, support families, and strengthen the bonds of community.

As a community rooted in Catholic tradition and enriched by people of many backgrounds and beliefs, Maristhill is strengthened when we honor shared values: compassion, dignity, reconciliation, and accompaniment. May this month inspire us to follow Mary's example by standing faithfully with those who suffer, seeking reconciliation where it is needed, and trusting that God's grace is present even when the path is difficult.

May **Our Lady of Sorrows** pray for us, and may your September be filled with grace and blessings.

In Gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chad Puclowski". The script is fluid and cursive.

Chad Puclowski, D.Min.

Director of Mission and Spiritual Care