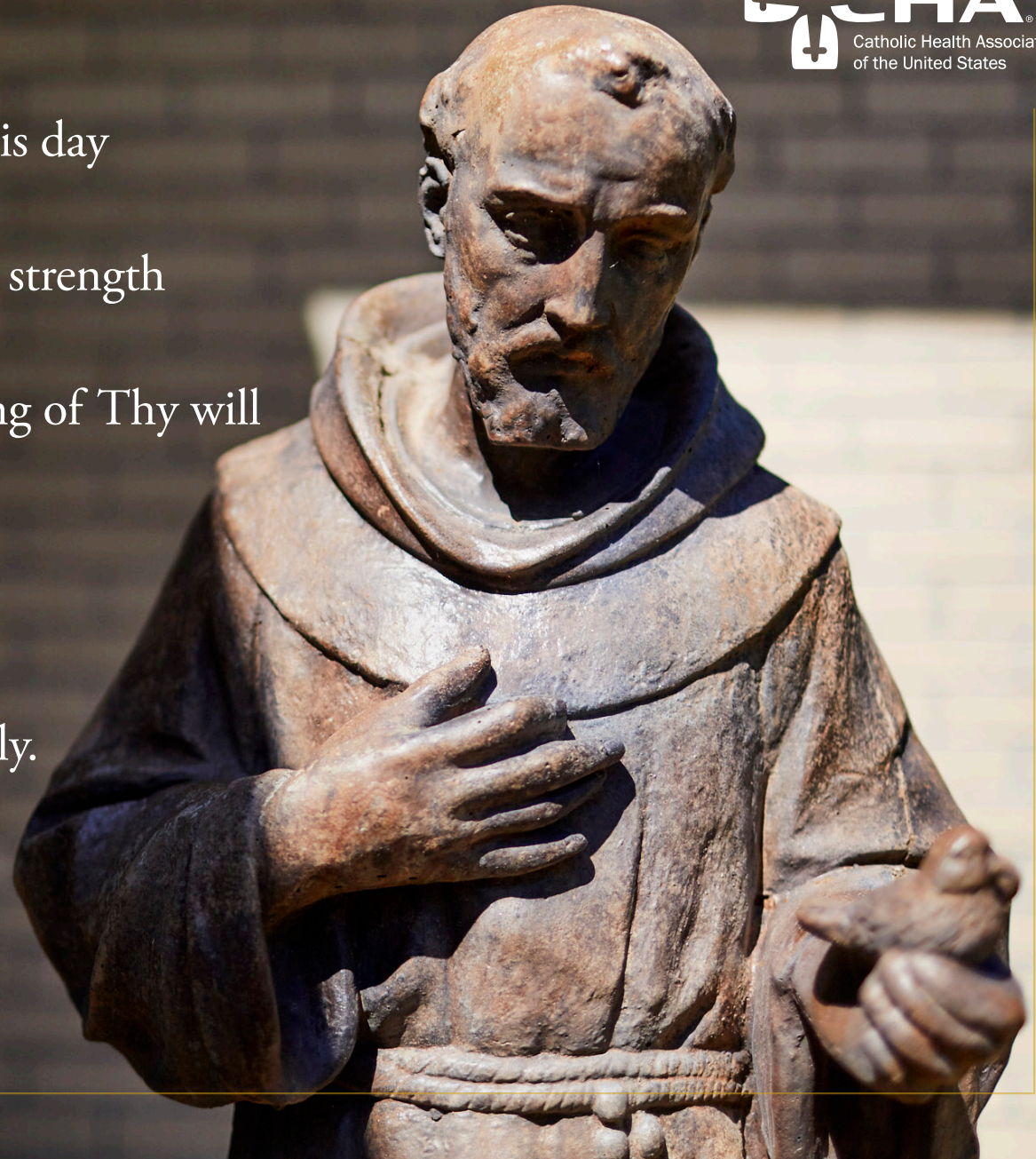


Lord, help me to live this day
quietly, peacefully.
To lean upon Thy great strength
trustfully, restfully.
To wait for the unfolding of Thy will
patiently, serenely.
To meet others
peacefully, joyously.
To face tomorrow
confidently, courageously.
Amen.

– SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI



A REFLECTION

To contract leprosy in medieval Assisi was more than a diagnosis; it marked the end of a person's way of life. Lepers were required to wear special clothing, live apart from the community and ring bells to warn others of their location. To be a leper was to be a walking infection, an outcast, a nonperson in the eyes of society.

Before his conversion, Francis despised lepers; their illness and poverty frightened and repelled him. Shortly after his conversion, Francis heard a leper's bell while traveling. In the past, he would have turned away. Moved by love and mercy through his own fear, Francis hurried toward the leprous man, gave alms, embraced and kissed him. Francis transcended the label, "leper," to see the face of God in the man standing before him.

- ✦ *Who are the modern day lepers?*
- ✦ *What labels do I place on people that keep me from seeing them as created and loved by God?*

CLOSING PRAYER

Ever gracious Creator
God, we are grateful
for the life of Francis
of Assisi. Inspire in
us his love of peace,
care for the poor and
protection of creation.

Amen.