On May 12, 2000 at 12 noon after a moment of silence AHNA members Mary Gorka, RN, CHTP, Charlottesville, Virginia networker and Cindy Westley, RN, MSN, HNC, University of Virginia Medical Center, Community Services Coordinator, along with Joan Murray, Chaplain at UV A, and a former nurse at the Medical Center of the University of Virginia gave a local blessing of hands to nurses. That year, other Chaplains joined in to lead a wonderful effort in support of nursing. This tradition has been continued each year as way to celebrate the Nightingale Moment and honor the spirit of holistic nursing. Copies of the blessing were given to those who attended the ceremony to take back to their units to extend the blessings.

The blessing is a responsive reading, leader says one line, the group the next. This Blessing of the Hands is from In Praise of Hands, Diann Neu, Waterwheel, Winter 1989. Adapted by Corlette Pierson, Pastoral Care Resident at Rush-Presbyterian-St. Luke's Medical Center, Chicago, IL. This Blessing of the Hands may be copied and used for Nightingale Moment activities, but is not intended to be sold.

Nurses' Hands

Blessed be these hands that have touched life. Blessed be these hands that have felt pain.

Blessed be these hands that have embraced with compassion.

Blessed be these hands that have been clinched with anger or withdrawn in fear.

Blessed be these hands that have drawn blood and administered medicine.

Blessed be these hands that have cleaned beds and disposed of wastes.

Blessed be these hands that have anointed the sick and offered blessings.

Blessed be these hands that grow stiff with age.

Blessed be these hands that have comforted the dying and held the dead.

Blessed be these hands, we hold the future in these hands.

Blessed be our hands for they are the work of Your hands, 0 Holy One.