

# The Doctor's Coat

On two days during the year, a certain doctor goes upstairs to his closet and takes out of it a coat that is out of style. One sleeve is patched, and it's rather tawdry and stringy and dirty.

He showed it to a visitor one day, and when asked why he wore it on certain days of the year, the doctor told the story.

When he was an intern in New York City, in lower Manhattan, he had a visitor one very blustery, cold, wintry night. A little girl came banging at his door. He threw on his jacket, and he went with her to a stinking tenement, up very dirty stairs into a one-room apartment. There, a little boy lay terribly sick. His mother and father were hovering over him.

The doctor did what he could for the malnourished child, but in spite of his best efforts, the little boy died right in front of him.

The doctor was shivering – not only from the hurt he was experiencing over the death of the boy, but because there was no heat in that tenement.

The boy's father took off his coat, gave it to the doctor and said, "Here, you're cold. Thank you for trying to save our boy."

The doctor knew then and there that this was the only way this couple could possibly thank him. He didn't have the heart to refuse or give the coat back.

Now that the doctor is prominent and fairly wealthy, twice a year – on the anniversary of the boy's death and the day he got his diploma to be a doctor – he wears that coat to remind himself of what it's all about.



This story is a reminder of three important realities:

1. The mission we are called to do in health care is incredibly important to the people we serve.
2. We may not always be successful – no matter how hard we try – in the results we strive to achieve for our residents and their families, but we are dealing with human beings, and their lives are ultimately in God's hands.
3. Whatever happens, in the good times and the bad, we must always keep in mind the reason – and the plan God has for us – to choose this profession.

And may God bless you for answering His call.

– Beecher Hunter