

The Beacon

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The HealthCare Chaplaincy Takes Lead Role at Historic International Spiritual Care Symposium

"Ten years from now, you won't recognize the face of professional chaplaincy, and it's because of the incredible work done at this conference," said the Rev. George Handzo, HCC's director of clinical services and president of the Association of Professional Chaplains (APC).

The HealthCare Chaplaincy provided an important presence of leadership and support at this "EPIC Experience: Charting the Future of Chaplaincy and Pastoral Counseling" held in Toronto from February 23 to February 26. Thirty-five HCC chaplains and staff appeared on panels, led workshops, attended organizational board meetings, and led worship services. "HCC's presence made a very positive impression on the conference," said Rabbi Stephen Roberts, HCC chaplain at New York-Presbyterian Hospital and president of the National Association of Jewish Chaplains (NAJC).



The Rev. Dr. Yvonne Valeris, the Rev. Michael Carter, Rabbi Charles Rabinowitz, and Rabbi Beth Nadich were certified at a banquet during the EPIC conference.

This first international conference of chaplains from diverse faiths was attended by some 1,200 individuals from the U.S., Canada, and Europe. Virtually all agreed that conference workshops, plenary sessions, services, and fellowship meetings were a solid foundation for the future.

An Unprecedented Celebration of Diversity

The symposium for multifaith spiritual caregivers marked the first time in history four of the major professional chaplaincy associations in the United States and Canada, comprised of chaplains of all faiths, came

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The Hajj: One Chaplain's Holy Pilgrimage

The Journey of a Lifetime

"I felt like I was standing, alone, naked before God. I cried and cried and didn't even know why."

That epiphany happened in the city of Arafat. It is the moment Imam Yusuf Hasan, staff chaplain at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center and Lenox Hill Hospital, remembers most about making the *Hajj*, or pilgrimage to Mecca. Translated loosely as "journey," the Hajj is performed by over two million Muslims each year. It is one of the Five Pillars of Islam that all Muslims who are able should make this journey once in their lifetime.

"I was so excited to go," said Chaplain Hasan. "I've been wanting to make the Hajj since 1980, when I was studying to be an Imam. So when Father Smith (The Rev. Dr. Walter J. Smith, S.J., The Chaplaincy's CEO) began encouraging me, I started to make my preparations." It was the first time Imam

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...This is the paradox of vision: Sharp perception softens our existence in the world.

Susan Griffin, "Happiness"

Like most things worth having, great vision is indeed a paradox. At its core is a keen, incisive focus. Yet it is often this sharp insight that opens the doors on a softer world, where compassion, equality, and freedom are the true rulers.



I have been privileged in my tenure at The HealthCare Chaplaincy to benefit from the brilliance of many great leaders. Our Board of Trustees and advisory committees have been comprised of extraordinary experts in fields such as financial planning, real estate, law, religious life, and, of course, healthcare. Their dedication and professional guidance have been invaluable to their clients and constituents, and to The Chaplaincy in its mission to provide pastoral care services to those in need.

Our chaplains approach their work with equal professionalism. Their formal pastoral education has endowed them with "sharp perception" in matters of illness, death and dying, and tragedy. Yet this skillful awareness is what allows them to offer spiritual solace to patients, families, and staff, "softening their existence" in their darkest hours.

At the same time, The Chaplaincy's work would not be possible without visionary healthcare leaders who believe in the connection between spirituality and healing.

This past January, The Chaplaincy and the world lost a great steward in Dr. David Skinner. As a physician, educator, and healthcare executive, Dr. Skinner's bold vision culminated in laying the foundation for a more integrated, quality healthcare system in the merger of two world-class medical institutions to form the New York-Presbyterian Hospital and the New York-Presbyterian Healthcare System, linking nearly 40 facilities. His work was no doubt that of a shrewd businessman. Yet it resulted in the delivery of high-quality healthcare services to many communities in the metropolitan area.

Healing Moments



On Sacred Ground

by Chaplain Jane Mather
Director of Pastoral Care
Winthrop-University Hospital

A Sudden Tragedy

It was a late-November Saturday afternoon.

While most people were either shopping or enjoying leftover Thanksgiving turkey, one Jewish family was doing neither. Their seven year old presented at the Winthrop-University Hospital with a 'queasy tummy' that degenerated—in less than 24 hours—into irreversible cardiopulmonary arrest. This boy was an infant transplant survivor with a very long medical history, and his young Mom and not-too-old Grandmother had wanted to believe that, after seven years of weathering infections and rejections, per-

haps he really had cornered the market on resiliency. His death that Saturday came as a complete betrayal of their expectations, their experience, and their vigilance.

Mom and Grandma sat silent and stoic as they tried to absorb the loss. Because it was the Sabbath, efforts to find their rabbi had been unsuccessful. So the ER staff, noting the family's distress, called the pastoral care office to offer the family support. I was on the other end of the pager.

Learning About Diversity

I'm a Roman Catholic layperson. Part of the reason I moved to New York City from Washington State was to have more diverse pastoral experiences. I'd felt as if my life in middle-America had left me ignorant about the beliefs of most of God's people in the world. While CPE prepares us to minister to people of all—or no—faith traditions, no one from any but the Christian faith ever

End-of-Life Issues Are Focus of Third Annual Winter Clinical Pastoral Education Day

Dr. Skinner's commitment to care that is compassionate as well as high quality was evidenced by his support of the hospital's partnership with The HealthCare Chaplaincy. The establishment of a Department of Pastoral Care and Education attended to the spiritual dimension of health and healing for so many patients who have passed through the hospital's doors. In 2000, The Chaplaincy presented Dr. Skinner with a Lifetime Achievement award, recognizing his concern for the wholeness of life.

Perhaps the most fitting tribute The Chaplaincy can pay Dr. Skinner is to continue in pursuit of our shared goal—compassionate healthcare that nourishes the mind, body, and spirit. We shall miss his extraordinary vision, and his ability to "soften our existence in the world."

Dr. Walter J. Smith, D.D.



As patients confront the end of life, chaplains face a series of complex questions when ministering to these patients and their families and loved ones. Do patient and family agree? Has the patient made his or her wishes known? How large a part does religion play?

For the 70 Chaplaincy students, chaplains, staff, and trustees at Winter CPE Day, these issues came dramatically to life as chaplains from various hospitals, under the direction of the Rev. Meigs Ross, director of pastoral care and education at St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center, acted out a chaplain-patient-family interaction based on a compilation of recent "verbatim" case studies. Held each winter and summer, CPE day provides an opportunity for Chaplaincy students from each of HCC's partner institutions to learn from other CPE supervisors, Chaplaincy program staff, and each other.

The panel "reenacted" a student chaplain's response to a dying patient who was reluctant to receive pastoral care, and some of whose family were in denial about the seriousness of his illness. After each segment, a panel of chaplains commented on the issues raised and answered questions from the students and other guests.

The panel included Rabbi Shira Stern, director of The Chaplaincy's Jewish Institute for Pastoral Care; Chaplain Jane Mather, director of

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(Top) CPE student Tim St. Onge (Above) Chaplains lead a panel discussion of end-of-life issues

seemed to be in my hospital in Spokane. I made a conscious choice in coming here to learn about other perceptions of God, life, and wisdom. But when that pager went off, I hadn't even been here two months. In my mind, I was still ignorant.

Finding Common Ground

After unsuccessfully attempting to reach the local rabbi, I knew it was time for me to offer something besides Kleenex and coffee. I swallowed my religious ignorance (which I was feeling as pastoral ineptitude) and said, "I am not Jewish and I don't know the teachings from your tradition that might bring you comfort at this time. But I am a mother, and for me motherhood has been a precious, painful, sacred responsibility. As I listen to you talk about your journey with your son—and yours with your daughter and grandson—I hear in you that kind of dedication. I wonder if we might meet the God of creation together on this painful, holy

ground—as mothers—and ask comfort and healing on your hearts and minds?" From there we recited psalms (I was stuck with the ones I knew by heart, but they turned out to be just fine), wept, and embraced until the rabbi called and more family arrived.

This first lesson in diversity highlighted for me the commonness of our sacred humanity. I was fortunate to be able to attend the EPIC conference in Toronto, where chaplains of all faiths and backgrounds collaborated, and where I was again reminded of how reaching across faith traditions can strengthen not only our pastoral knowledge but also our personal spirituality. I know that as I continue to absorb the lessons of multifaith ministry and diversity provided so abundantly in New York, both my spirit and my faith will continue to grow. For these opportunities I am very grateful.



(Left) Chaplaincy researchers the Rev. Dr. Andrew Weaver (left) and Dr. Kevin Flannelly conduct a well-attended workshop on professional chaplaincy and scientific research.

EPIC Spiritual Care Symposium (continued from page 1)

together to collaborate on the future of professional pastoral care. The APC and NAJC, each led by Chaplaincy staff members, were joined by The Canadian Association for Pastoral Practice and Education (CAPE) and the National Association of Catholic Chaplains (NACC) as conference sponsors.

Sharing Practical Wisdom

The diversity of the conference provided unique opportunities for participants to learn about each other's faiths and cultures. In over 60 workshops and panels, participants learned about topics that included ministering to Buddhist, Muslim, and Jewish patients; about developing cross-cultural competence; cultural and spiritual needs of Hispanics; and spiritual care for the gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender communities. Chaplaincy staff workshops included discussion of ministry to AIDS patients, boundary issues for chaplains, and an exploration of recent scientific research in pastoral care.

Many of the workshops were hands-on, designed to provide participants with tools they could take home and immediately put to use. Imam Yusuf Hasan's workshop focused on end-of-life issues for Islamic patients, noting the importance of particular text and ritual. After attending a workshop on organizing a pastoral care volunteer program led by The Chaplaincy's Michael Moran, Rabbi Bernie Barsky was enthusiastic about what he had learned. "I've wanted to learn to mobilize people in the community, and this was extremely helpful," he said.

Certification of Chaplaincy Staff and Students

Three of The Chaplaincy's newer staff and a former residency student were certified at the conference: the Rev. Michael Carter, staff chaplain at New York Hospital Medical Center of Queens, and the Rev. Dr. Yvonne Valeris, former supervisory resident and CPE supervisor at The Brooklyn Hospital Center were certified by the APC; Rabbi Beth Naditch, former CPE resident, and Rabbi Charles Rabinowitz, former CPE resident and staff chaplain at North Shore University Hospital, were certified by the NAJC. "Board certification is an achievement that I'm very proud of," said the Rev. Carter, "and I'm thrilled to be recognized in the presence of so many of my Chaplaincy colleagues."

Collaboration and Progress

"We are pleased to have provided a strong level of support for this important event," said the Rev. Dr. Walter J. Smith, SJ, The Chaplaincy's president and CEO. In a remarkable gesture of support, Father Smith offered a challenge grant of \$100,000 from The Chaplaincy for the development of four proposals ratified at an historic joint meeting of the boards of the four associations. The proposals call for the establishment of universal standards for pastoral care, education, and ethics, allowing the four distinct associations to speak with one voice on issues of professional spiritual care. "This is a momentous step in the professionalization of chaplaincy," noted the Rev. Handzo.

Rabbi Bonita Taylor, staff educator and ACPE supervisor at The Chaplaincy, sits on the board of the NAJC and was on the conference planning committee. Rabbi Taylor noted that meeting the worship, dietary, cultural, and other needs of each of the four organizations was a major challenge. "I am very proud of the way we were able to meet with integrity the needs of each association and also the needs of the group as a whole," she said. "This conference showed real diversity at work."

(Left) Chaplaincy Librarian Sharon Brown (right) talks with a participant in her workshop on building a pastoral care library.



(Top)
The Rev. Dr. Walter J. Smith, S.J., The Chaplaincy's CEO, leads an anointing of the sick service and Catholic mass.



(Above)
The Rev. George Handzo, The Chaplaincy's director of clinical services and institutional relations, speaks to the conference's 1200 attendees at the welcoming banquet.

(Right)
Rabbi Shira Stern, director of The Chaplaincy's Jewish Institute for Pastoral Care, leads a workshop on boundary issues and self-care for chaplains.

(Below)
Chaplain Michael Moran, staff chaplain at Brooklyn Hospital Center, leads a workshop on developing a volunteer chaplaincy program; over 100 people attended.



The Hajj (continued from page 1)



Hasan had been out of the United States.

The Rituals of Hajj

For Muslims, the Hajj is an opportunity to walk in the footsteps of the prophets Abraham and Mohammed, and to visit the *Ka'bah* (House of God) inside the Holy Mosque in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. The Ka'bah is the focal point toward which Muslims turn their worship five times each day. It was built by Abraham and rebuilt by Mohammed after many years of idolatry had destroyed it.

The Hajj begins on the eighth day of *Dhul-Hijjah* (month for Hajj), the 12th month of the Islamic year, and lasts for as long as six days. Over the course of the Hajj, pilgrims travel the nine miles from Mecca to the Plain of Arafat and back, stopping at the sacred sites of Mina and Muzdalifa to perform prayerful rituals.

Before Muslims can set foot in Mecca, they must don an *Ihram*—two pieces of plain white cloth for men, a simple white dress for women—which symbolizes purity and the equality of all people in the eyes of God. Before they can remove the garment, they must perform *Umrah*, a ritual that includes a seven-fold circling, or *tawaf*, of the Ka'bah, a distance of almost four miles.

"It was amazing how well thousands of people, all walking through the same place, were able to get along," recalls Imam Hasan. The Holy Mosque can hold over a million people. "It shows us that peace is possible," he said. He also noted that men and women pray together during Umrah and Hajj.

Before beginning the actual Hajj, Chaplain Hasan stopped in Medina, the burial place of Mohammed. "Being in Medina was very moving for me," Imam Hasan said. "It was sad to leave—I felt like I was leaving family." He and the other pilgrims left Medina for Mina, also known as the "City of Tents." "We stayed in tents, thousands as far as the eye could see, to recreate the hardship of the Prophet and his followers," he explained.

Purifying the Soul

From Mina the pilgrims journeyed to Arafat for most important rite of Hajj. Here they pray for forgiveness on or around the Mount of Rahmah (Mountain of Mercy). Many Muslims are moved to tears at this closeness with God. They proceed solemnly from Arafat to Muzdalifah, where they sleep under the stars in the cold desert night. Here they collect pebbles to be thrown at three *Jamrahs*, or pillars, a ritual that symbolizes the conquering of one's own personal demons.

During the Hajj Muslims celebrate *Eid-ul-Adha*—the Feast of the Sacrifice. Each Muslim contributes to having a lamb or another animal slaughtered to commemorate Abraham's great act of faith in his willingness to slaughter his own son. Then they partake in a great feast which is celebrated by Muslims all over the world.

Renewal Through Challenge and Endurance

The Hajj is a physically challenging journey. Pilgrims walk for miles, sleep outside in the desert, and endure crowds and other difficult conditions. Yet these faithful followers feel renewed by the Hajj. "I came home feeling as pure as a newborn baby," Imam Hasan emotionally recalls.

"This experience was very humbling for me," he said. "It reminded me that life is not a bed of roses. It's difficult to live out in the world. But on Hajj, being with people from all over the world, I learned that we can live together peacefully, as God wants us to."

The Hajj

- 1 Before entering Mecca, pilgrims don sacred *Ihram* and perform other cleansing rituals.
- 2 In Mecca pilgrims perform the initial *tawaf*, a seven-fold circling of the Ka'bah, a shrine in the Great Mosque.
- 3 On the first official day of Hajj, pilgrims travel to Mina, the "City of Tents."
- 4 Pilgrims travel to Arafat, about nine miles from Mecca, to offer prayers on the mountain where Muslims believe Mohammed delivered his final sermon.
- 5 That evening, pilgrims travel to Muzdalifah and sleep under the stars.
- 6 Pilgrims return to Mina where they throw stones at the *Jamrah*, signifying Abraham's stoning of Satan and also the symbolic "stoning" of personal demons.
- 7 Pilgrims return to Mecca for the farewell *tawaf*.



Over the course of the Hajj, pilgrims travel the nine miles from Mecca to the Plain of Arafat and back, stopping at the sacred sites of Mina and Muzdalifa to perform prayerful rituals.

Health and Healing

A Growing Connection: A Pastoral Care Volunteer Program and the Community

Answering a Calling

"I feel I have fine-tuned what God wants me to do in this life," said Ruth Lashley, a pastoral care volunteer at Chaplaincy partner Brookdale University Hospital and Medical Center. A lay pastor at Miracle Temple Ministries Pentecostal Church and a former hospital lab technician, Ruth uses her spiritual and professional background in volunteer pastoral visits with patients.



Like many of Brookdale's pastoral care volunteers, Ruth learned about the program through her church, which had responded to an outreach from the Rev. Carlos de la Peña, director of pastoral care at Brookdale. "I reached out to the local houses of worship, and they sent me their best, most committed people," he said. "Volunteers provide a valuable extension of the pastoral care services offered by the hospital. Many of them visit patients on nights and weekends, when I'm not here." He reports that his cadre of more than 30 volunteers makes an average of 2000 patient visits every month. "But these numbers can't accurately measure the extremely positive effect these trained volunteers have on our patients," he said.

A Strong Foundation

Chaplain de la Peña was pleased to find a volunteer program already in place when he arrived at Brookdale in May of last year. HCC's Chaplain Michael Moran, Brookdale's former director of pastoral care and education, created the program as a service to the community and the patients. "I saw a need to bring the hospital closer to the community," said Chaplain Moran. "And I knew that these volunteers would learn skills in empathy and listening that they would take back to their congre-



gations." Chaplain Moran recently brought his expertise in creating pastoral care volunteer programs to the EPIC conference in Toronto, where he taught a workshop to over 100 chaplains from hospitals across North America. (See story on page 1). "I'm very pleased the program at Brookdale is doing so well," he said.

A Training Program that Works

Pastoral care volunteers at Brookdale complete an intense 25 hours of training before they begin their work with patients, including 15 hours of classroom time and 10 hours of supervised pastoral care visits with Chaplain de la Peña. A psychologist, a patient advocate, and a nutritionist are among the staff that join him in the classroom training. "I brought in a nutritionist because I want the volunteers to learn how to stay healthy—physically and other-



wise," he said. "The healthier they are, the better equipped they are to work with patients." After training, volunteers also lead staff prayer groups and worship services at Brookdale.

"Without the training and Pastor de la Peña's supervision, I couldn't do what I'm doing here," said volunteer Margo Fields. "Once I was called to go with a family to the morgue to view their deceased loved one," she recalled. "It was only because of our training that I felt competent to be with them at that difficult time. We learn to be present for patients who are sad, frustrated, even angry."

Carmen Velazquez, a Roman Catholic Eucharistic minister and Brookdale pastoral volunteer for five years, visits patients every weekday from nine to five. "Many patients have no family and need someone to talk to," she said. "And there are some who will tell a volunteer things that they can't tell their family."

"There are so many people out there with a lot of compassion," said the Rev. de la Peña. "This program allows them to help make a difference in a way that is meaningful for them."

(Top) Lenora Johnson leads a worship service as part of her volunteer duties. (Middle) Pastoral care volunteer Eva Dean prays with a mother and her little boy before he is discharged. (Bottom) The Rev. Carlos de la Peña coordinates patient visits with pastoral care volunteers at Brookdale.

For information about establishing a volunteer chaplaincy program at your institution, write to "Information" at The HealthCare Chaplaincy, or send an e-mail to [Info@healthcarechaplaincy](mailto:Info@healthcarechaplaincy.org) .org.

Chaplaincy Briefs

The **Rev. Carlos Alejandro** (North General Hospital), the **Rev. Trudi Hirsch** (Beth Israel Singer Division), and the **Rev. Dr. Yvonne Valeris** (The Brooklyn Hospital Center) were approved as full clinical pastoral education (CPE) supervisors at the Association of Clinical Pastoral Education Certification Committee meeting in March. This accomplishment is a testament to their hard work and clinical competence, and to the work of their CPE supervisors at The HealthCare Chaplaincy.

Chaplaincy research assistant **Karen G. Costa** represented The Chaplaincy's research department at the annual meeting of the Eastern Psychological Association in March. She presented the results of a study titled "A Quantitative Analysis of Behavioral Research on Religion and Spirituality in Various Age Groups: 1971-2002." Ms. Costa was the first author on the study; Chaplaincy researchers **Drs. Kevin Flannelly** and **Andrew Weaver** were co-authors.

Rabbi Stephen Roberts (New York-Presbyterian Hospital) spoke to over 100 mental health workers on "Spiritual Issues of the Elderly Regarding Isolation, Depression, and the Impact of September 11th." His presentation was part of a larger meeting

entitled: "The Silent Crisis: Seniors, Depression, and Mental Health," hosted by the Lower Manhattan Health Care Coalition & The Manhattan Coalition on Mental Health Issues of the Elderly.

Rabbi Bonita E. Taylor (The HealthCare Chaplaincy) has published an article entitled "Nearly Everything We Wish Our Non-Jewish Supervisors Had Known About Us As Jewish Supervisees" (co-authored with NAJC colleague Rabbi David J. Zucker) in the Winter 2002 edition of *The Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling*.

Chaplain Barbara Yeager was presented with the prestigious Hamilton Award at the Westchester Division of New York-Presbyterian Hospital. This venerable award is given annually to a staff person who has made significant contributions over time to the compassionate care of patients.

The Rev. Carolyn Yard (New York-Presbyterian Hospital) has recently been appointed to the Board of the New York Regional Organ Donor Network. Her duties include review of policies and programs and raising awareness among minority communities regarding the importance of organ donation.

The Importance of Bequests

Each year thoughtful donors include The HealthCare Chaplaincy in their wills. With this gesture, they provide a legacy that will continue their annual support. The expansion of this tradition of remembrance will help ensure a secure future for The Chaplaincy. Won't you consider including The Chaplaincy in your will? It is a gift that will sustain your support of our mission—a mission that will enable future generations of chaplains and student chaplains to bring hope and healing to patients and their families.

If you are interested in making a bequest to The HealthCare Chaplaincy or would like more information about planned or deferred gifts, **please contact Fran McKinley in our development office at 212-644-1111, ext. 133, or e-mail her at fmckinley@healthcarechaplaincy.org.**

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The HealthCare Chaplaincy is the nation's largest non-denominational multifaith center for pastoral care, education, and research. The Chaplaincy is one of the most efficient charities in the country, with more than 80% of its funds going directly to programs that support its mission. This newsletter is published three times a year for friends, supporters, and alumni/ae. Please send address corrections and other correspondence to The HealthCare Chaplaincy.

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Third Annual Winter CPE Day (continued from page 3)

pastoral care at Winthrop Hospital; the Rev. Jo Clare Wilson, director of pastoral care and education at Griffin Hospital; and Imam Ramadan Zakat, supervisory resident at New York University Medical Center.

A morning presentation on pastoral research by HCC librarian Sharon Brown provided insight into the extent and organization of the holdings of The Chaplaincy's Joan B. & William G. Spears Center for Pastoral Research.

Afternoon workshops were held on such topics as "Energy Medicine" (Rabbi Jeffrey Silberman), "When the Pillars Come Crashing Down: The Effects of the Clinical Method of Learning on Our Pastoral Care" (the Rev. Dr. Yvonne Valeris), "Using the Aesthetic in Pastoral Care, The ART of Pastoral Care" (Chaplain David Fries), and "Understanding Personality in Pastoral Care" (the Rev. Dr. John Bucchino, O.F.M.).

"This has been a great experience for me," said CPE stu-

dent Tim St. Onge. A Catholic studying at Griffin Hospital in Derby, Connecticut, Tim said he benefited from the interfaith dialogues that CPE day inspired. "It was also wonderful to listen to so many seasoned supervisors who really get to the heart and soul of the matter," he said.

Sarah Nazimova-Bach, a Quaker student at Beth Israel Singer Division, was excited about meeting her fellow students. "You form such an intimacy with your own group, which is really intense and wonderful," she said. "But it's enlightening to open up and learn from the other students as well."

"We are very pleased at the success of this CPE Day," said the Rev. Denise G. Haines, HCC's director of education and community outreach. "The educational leadership shown by our chaplains and staff is a strong testament to The Chaplaincy's quality and standards. It's heartening to see our CPE Day tradition thrive and grow."