

numa

caring for the spirit at nrgh

Seeing Things

I grew up on a nursery and every year my dad planted thousands of seeds that would become next season's petunia, marigold and tomato plants. In order to keep the little seedlings alive through the cold winter months the boiler had to constantly burn to heat the inside of the greenhouses. If the boiler ever stopped burning there was the danger that the seedlings would freeze and die.

There were many nights when my dad would ask one of us to go outside and see that smoke was still coming out of the boiler's chimney. Smoke meant the greenhouses were still warm. I was probably about eight years old the first time he asked me to check on the chimney. As I looked up at the top of the chimney on that dark and cold night I didn't see anything. From what I could gather the boiler had burned out so I ran back to the house and told my dad that the fire had died.

As he and I walked out together he also looked up at the chimney. Then he knelt down beside me and told me that I would see more clearly if I looked a little to the side of where I thought the smoke should be. And sure enough, in the periphery, I could see the smoke wafting out into the night sky.

While my dad helped me to discover peripheral vision I have also come to realize that we also have "peripheral vision of the soul". Sometimes when we look directly at a problem we can't see anything good or positive. All seems lost and hopeless. But sometimes if we look just a little to the side of our problem we begin to see things. Beautiful things. We may see our children and friends who surround us and love us. Looking to the side of our problems can reveal to us our good health, great past memories and the knowledge we've gotten through hard times before. All things that help put the present problem in perspective.



When to Call Spiritual Care

Is someone C.R.U.S.H.E.D. in spirit?

- **C**omplaining
- **R**equesting religious ritual
- **U**nable to cope
- **S**cared
- **H**urting
- **E**xperiencing Loss
- **D**isconnected (self,others, "God")

**Consider calling
Spiritual Care
54022**

The voyage of discovery lies not in seeking new vistas, but in having new eyes.

Proust

For A Nurse

Your mind knows the world of illness,
The fright that invades a person
Arriving in out of the world,
Distraught and grieved by illness.
How it can strip a life of its joy,
Dim the light of the heart
Put shock in the eyes.

You see world breaking
At the onset of illness:

Families at bedsides distraught
That their mother's name has come up
In the secret lottery of misfortune
That had always chosen someone else.
You watch their helpless love
That would exchange places with her.

The veil of skin opened,
The search through the body's night
To remove tissue, war-torn with cancer.

Young lives that should be out in the sun
Enjoying life with wild hearts,
Come in here lamed by accident
And the lucky ones who leave,
Already old and in captive posture.

The elderly, who should be prepared,
But are frightened and unsure.
You understand no one
Can learn beforehand
An elegant or easy way to die.

In this fragile frontier-place, your kindness
Becomes a light that consoles the brokenhearted,
Awakens within desperate storms
That oasis of serenity that calls
The spirit to rise from beneath the weight of pain,
To create a new space in the person's mind
Where they gain distance from their suffering
And begin to see the invitation
To integrate and transform it.

May you embrace the beauty in what you do
And how you stand like a secret angel
Between the bleak despair of illness
And the unquenchable light of spirit
That can turn the darkest destiny towards dawn.

May you never doubt the gifts you bring;
Rather, learn from these frontiers
Wisdom for your own heart.

May you come to inherit
The blessings of your kindness
And never be without care and love
When winter enters your own life.

By John O'Donahue
To Bless the Space Between Us

Faiths in Focus

Christianity is a monotheistic faith that developed from the life and teaching of a Jewish rabbi



(teacher) named Jesus. Christians believe that Jesus fulfills the Jewish expectations of the Messiah (Hebrew for "Anointed One", "Christ" in Greek). The Messiah would be God's special messenger who would reveal God's love, peace and justice to the world.

Sacred days for Christians are typically Sunday (commemoration of the resurrection) and days

that follow the events of Jesus' life: Christmas (birth), Good Friday (crucifixion), Easter (resurrection), Ascension (his return to heaven) and Pentecost (the giving of the Holy Spirit).

Healthcare issues for Christians will include visitation from a pastor or priest, engaging in prayers and in reading from the bible and other inspirational books. (*'Faiths in Focus' appears regularly in numa to explore different faiths and related healthcare issues. Next issue: "Islam"*)

Accessing Spiritual Care

Spiritual Care is available 24/7 to patients, their families and hospital staff. To contact Spiritual Care call local 54022 or 250.713.3883. The chaplain is on site Monday – Friday from 830-1630.

For after hours spiritual care contact the switchboard for an available on-call chaplain. For clergy from a particular faith tradition consult the Faith Community Directory available on each unit.

Sacred Space at NRGH

The NRGH chapel is a quiet place for reflection and is open to all. It is located on the basement floor close to the pain clinic. You can access the chapel by going down the stairs across from the cafeteria and turning right. Alternately, you can go down the elevator near the cafeteria and turn left.

Numa (Greek for spirit) is the quarterly newsletter of Spiritual Care Services at the Nanaimo Regional General Hospital.