Helping Strangers in a Strange Land

Presenters

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Today's Topic

Chaplains in interfaith settings

- Remaining authentic
- Avoiding ethical dilemmas

Catholic — Jewish Perspectives

- Different eyes
- Different ears
- Different sensibilities
- Different perspectives
- Different training
- Other differences

Strangers

Scriptural Basis

- Befriend the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. **(Dt 10:19)**
- Befriend the patient, for you were strangers (patients – inmates) in the land of institution.
- Befriend the stranger, for you were a CPE stranger in this same land of institution.

Foreign Lands

Hospitals – Nursing homes – Prisons

- Different Laws – Lack of Autonomy
  - You will take your medicine; give specimens; bathe as directed
  - You confined to your floor, room, cell . . .
- The staff are powerful authority figures
  - ***They*** filter information to and from the physicians
  - ***They*** filter information to and from the outside world
  - ***They*** decide when you can or cannot leave or have visitors
- Lack of privacy

Chaplains are...

- “Good Samaritans”
- Angels among us
- God’s caring presence

Chaplains

When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you? **(Mt 25:39)**

- We see the divine image in our brothers and sisters **(Gen 1:27)**
- We see Jesus in the sick and infirm
- We see Jesus in prison

Am I my brother's keeper? **(Gen 4:10)**

Evangelium Vitae Chapter 1 para 8

There is a "lack of solidarity towards society's weakest members — such as the elderly, the infirm [ill or sick], immigrants, children..."

Talmudic Precepts

Babylonian Talmud Shabbat 127a
Daily Liturgy

- Honor due parents
- Acts of kindness
- Hospitality to guests
- Visiting the sick

What is the role of the chaplain?

Morally — Ethically — Theologically

- To pray with *all* patients?
- To provide moral, ethical, theological guidance?
- Can vs. Should

Can a Catholic Chaplain pray the prayers of other faiths?

- Mi Sheh Bey-rakh?
- Shema Israel?
- Prayer of Moses?
- Prayers as a person is dying?

Can a Rabbi pray Catholic Prayers?

- Blessing of the sick?
- The Our Father?
- The Hail Mary?
- Commendation of the Dying?

Can we rename God?

Perhaps, Should we rename God?

- Spirit of the Universe
- Great Spirit
- Allah
- Goddess
- Sophia
- Satan

Case for Discussion

A chaplain enters a patient's room and chats with the patient and family. The chaplain has determined that the patient and family are of a different faith than the chaplain.

What Should the Chaplain do when:

- The patient is dying and the family asks the chaplain to "Say *the* prayers for the dying."
- The patient is scheduled for surgery and the patient says "Do you anoint people before surgery?"
- The patient is scheduled for surgery and asks the chaplain to pray for the doctor.
- The patient has had successful surgery and the family asks for prayers of thanksgiving.
- The patient is an infant scheduled for airlift to a children's center and may die enroute.

Did you like our presentation?

Pat and David are available to present at your local Chaplain Continuing Education event.

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