



LCA Pastoral Care Nurse **NOTES & NEWS**

No 145 September 2020

Spiritual Distress

As I look over Australia, we are all at different stages in our responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a Victorian who lives on the Victoria-New South Wales border, life for me has fairly firm restrictions.

In all of this I know how I feel, and I do feel spiritual distress as I ponder my disconnections from my family, my church family, and access to some things that are just over the border but Victorians are not allowed to access. Permits are needed to cross the border to get to work, to go to medical appointments. This is only available if you live within the 'blue line' on the map (about two km of the border). I feel anxious every time my pass, my letter from my employer and my driver's licence is checked. I often notice a police officer writing down car registration numbers too.

Spiritual distress is not always about religion. Spirituality is also tied in with wellbeing, purpose and meaning. Yet the God question comes up for religious people. I use the word religion here rather than Christian as I work in an ecumenical environment, and there are people of other faiths too. As a nurse we look to provide wholistic care.

Meaningful Ageing Australia says that 'spiritual care recognises and responds to a person's spiritual needs by supporting them to find meaning, purpose, and hope, and transcend loss, grief, disability, illness and pain'.

But what if we as nurses are suffering spiritual distress ourselves? We are living in some very different times, with the threat of illness, disability, death and financial difficulties hanging in the picture frame that we see. As nurses we need to take care of our own spiritual wellbeing in a wholistic way looking out for our mental health, our physical health and our spiritual health.

Being aware of how you are feeling is a great start; but as we know, we need to put action

with that awareness. Seeking support – some pastoral counselling, spiritual direction, and professional supervision – are some ways that are open to us.

Do you have access to an employee-assistance package? If you do, this may be accessed. For those who are carers of family members (like I am), have you accessed the carer gateway for support? Have a look at their website at: www.carergateway.gov.au. This is also a resource for people you care for in your Pastoral Care Nurse role.

There is benefit in using the services yourself, and it can also give you firsthand experience so you are able to recommend the service for others with confidence.

As we move forward each day – one day at a time – there are changes all the time, and I look to the scriptures and see that difficult times will pass too. God is with us always. He is the same yesterday, today and forever as we transcend the changes.

To close, I would like to share with you a couple of verses from Psalm 40.

***But may all who seek you
rejoice and be glad in you;
may those who long for your saving help
always say,
'The Lord is great!'
But as for me, I am poor and needy;
may the Lord think of me.
You are my help and my deliverer;
you are my God, do not delay.***

(Psalm 40:16, 17)

**Angela Uhrhane
Wodonga, Vic**

Overseas nurses complete introductory course

Eight nurses from six Districts in the United States have completed the LNAA/LCMS *Introduction to Parish Nursing* course since it was introduced in the middle of last year. The US course coordinator, Dr Marcia Schnorr, maintains contact with each student, providing quarterly *Zoom* meetings. Once they have completed the course, students are put in contact with the Parish Nursing representative in their District as they take up their ministry.

Those who have completed the course are:

Sonja Kirk (Alabama)

Norma Lucas (appointed Parish Nurse at Fort William, Colorado and Parish Nurse representative for the Rocky Mountains District)

Jane Henry (Idaho)

Kathryn McNeal (Manhattan, Kansas)

Rebecca Newberry (Topeka, Kansas)

Lyn Batchelder (Maine/Massachusetts, Parish Nurse representative for New England)

Aimee Jambour and **Kristie Mueller** (North Minnesota District)

Mary McColeman (Michigan) is still to complete the course, while three nurses from Illinois, Indiana and Kansas are considering enrolling.

Earlier this year, **Jennifer Chua Bee Kiaw** became the first Singaporean Lutheran to complete the international version of LNAA's introductory course. Jennifer is a pastor's wife at the Bedok Lutheran church.



At the completion of the course, she wrote: 'I have enjoyed the learning journey, with your guidance and advice. I have benefited much from it indeed. Hopefully there will be an opportunity for me to use what I have learnt in the near future.' Jennifer is looking forward to joining next year's study tour to the United States.

LPNI Study Tours

The 2021 LPNI study tour will take participants to Williamsburg and Washington DC in the United States on 15-21 September.

Participants will fly into Dulles or Reagan airports and begin their tour at the Embassy Suites in Crystal City. They will stay in the Washington area for three days, to visit the Bible museum and national cathedral, and tour the city and other sites of national interest.

They will then travel to visit Colonial Williamsburg, Jamestown and Yorktown, to worship at King of Glory Lutheran church, and participate in a service project at a local Christian Outreach Centre before travelling back to the DC area for a final night at Crystal City.

Registration forms for this tour are available on the LPNI web site at lpni.org, or from robert.wiebusch@lca.org.au.

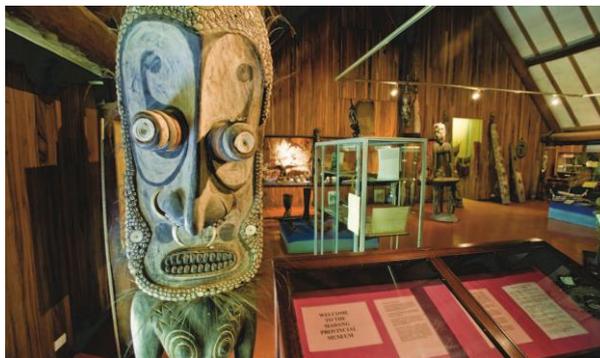
Costs: Shared room – US\$2077 (earlybird US\$1877). Single room – US\$2552 (earlybird US\$2352).

A US\$500 deposit is payable by 15 October.

A combined tour to Alice Springs in Central Australia and Madang in Papua New Guinea is being planned for 2022.

Tourists will visit the historic Hermannsburg mission, scenic Simpson's Gap, and other sites of interest in and around Alice Springs. In Madang, tourists will visit the museum, School of Nursing and a historic village hospital.

Uncertainty about airline schedules is delaying final planning, but it is expected that details will be available before the end of this year.



Participants will be able to register for either or both sectors of this tour.