



LCA Pastoral Care Nurse

NOTES & NEWS

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Jesus' wholistic ministry

A pattern for Pastoral Care Nurses

It was the summary of a sermon preached by the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Sydney that gave rise to this article.

Of the 37 miracles of Jesus described in the four Gospels, John records only eight. Significantly, he calls them 'signs'. Six of these miracles are unique to his Gospel. Each one is carefully chosen. As he points out towards the close of his Gospel, his aim was to show that Jesus is the Messiah Son of God, who brings life to people with faith in him. And there's a pattern to his miracle accounts.

Each one addresses a particular human need. Some involve an individual; others respond to needs faced by groups of people.

- Newlyweds face embarrassment as they run out of wine at the reception (2:1-11).
- A father is anxious for his little son who is dying of fever (4:43-54).
- A paralytic is unable to scramble into the miracle waters of a pool (5:1-9).
- Disciples fear drowning during a fierce lake storm (6:16-21).
- A man born blind (9:1-12) also needs spiritual sight.
- A man has died, and left his family grief-stricken (11:4-11).
- Fishermen have toiled all night without catching anything (21:4-11).

These incidents illustrate the broad and wholistic nature of Jesus' ministry, addressing the whole range of human needs – physical, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual.

Some have noticed that John's selected miracle accounts come in threes.

Three healing miracles reveal Jesus as the Good Physician of bodies and souls.

Three feeding miracles show him as the 'Bread of life'.

Three miracles show him as the 'Way, and the Truth and the Life'.

Three reveal him as the 'Resurrection and the Life'.



And in three, darkness is replaced by faith, showing Jesus as the 'Light of the world'.

In some of the incidents John describes, Jesus' miracles elicited faith where there had been no faith. In some, the miracle affirmed and strengthened the faith that was already there, and which led people to come to Jesus for help.

It was Martin Luther who coined the phrase, 'little Christs', for those who are followers and servants of Jesus Christ, carrying on his ministry to the people of this world. While it's a term that ideally applies to all Christ's followers, it applies in a special sense, it's particularly appropriate for those who serve in the wholistic ministry of Pastoral Care Nursing.

Many disciplines of nursing involve people's various human needs: psychological, mental, physical, and social. The Pastoral Care Nursing addresses all these needs. But its distinctive feature is its focus on people's spiritual wellbeing.

A diverse ministry

Lynette Wiebusch used to always say that the role of a Pastoral Care Nurse is as broad as the needs of the local church and its community require, and the skills, experience and time that the nurse has to serve in this role allow. The following 'snapshot' bears this out.

At Laidley, Queensland, Shirley Klinge regularly accompanied bereaved members to funeral homes for viewings of their departed loved one, and often played the organ at funeral services. Follow-up visits to those who are grieving is also an important aspect of a Pastoral Care Nurse's ministry.

As the Pastoral Care Nurse at Faith Lutheran secondary college at Plainland, Shirley accompanied a group of students on a visit to Disneyland in the United States.

Jenny Johnson in Northern Idaho, USA, is frequently called on to help adult children deal with a parent with advancing dementia, providing resources and offering advice on how to deal with a difficult situation.

Jenny lives in a high-growth area with many newcomers, and is frequently asked for names of health-care providers and specialists.

Angela Uhrhane served as Pastoral Care Nurse at the Lutheran Aged Care complex in Albury (LACA), NSW. From time to time while LACA was without a resident chaplain she was asked to conduct the funeral of a resident who had died.

In suburban Geelong, Victoria, ecumenical Faith Community Nurses, with support from local health agencies, set up health information displays in a suburban shopping hub.

While serving in Mt Barker, SA, Lynette Wiebusch was invited by the Director of Nursing at the local hospital to join the weekly discharge planning meetings with senior hospital staff because of her involvement with so many

people in the community. During one hospital visit she came across a patient who had been admitted on a number of occasions for chronic alcoholism. Over a period of nine months, and with support from alcohol counsellors, she 'walked with' the patient on a journey of recovery. The patient eventually became an active member of the congregation and its women's fellowship.

Around the world, Pastoral Care/Parish Nurses have found new and innovative ways that enabled them to continue serving during the COVID pandemic. At Trinity Methodist, in Southemsall, England, Parish Nurse Nicola Hobson had a gazebo placed on the church lawn as a temporary measure so she could offer support to people from the community, to overcome health issues associated with social isolation and bereavement.

At Caerhays, Cornwall, Parish Nurse Sarah Male provided health education to dispel vaccination myths. She collected and distributed prescriptions, and made sure meals were delivered to those in need, and continues to support people who feel isolated and anxious.

In Goroka, Papua New Guinea, the Parish Nurses regularly updated members with information about the COVID pandemic, and how best to remain safe.

Throughout the COVID pandemic, Dr Jamie Spikes, Parish Nurse at *St Luke's* in Manhattan, Kansas, USA, made face masks to share with others. Included was a set in liturgical colours for her pastor to wear during worship.

LPNI Study Tours

The Covid pandemic is continuing to make it a challenge to finalise plans for study tours. The **2021** tour to Washington DC and Williamsburg in eastern USA is still proceeding on 15-21 of this month. Practically all registrations are from within the United States.



Registrations are now being received for the **2022** tour to Alice Springs on 22-28 September. While it seems unlikely that Australia's borders will be open to general international travellers before the middle of next year, planning is continuing on the assumption that it will be possible for the tour to proceed. Registration forms are available from: robert.wiebusch@lca.org.au