



3rd Moira Ste. Marie Memorial Lecture

The lecture is in honour of Moira Ste. Marie, past Toronto Diocesan President, who was active at all levels of the League. Faith, family and community were important to Moira and this lecture endeavours to provide the larger community the opportunity to discuss issues of faith, health and bioethics. The lecture partners are the CWL, the Archdiocese of Toronto, St. Michael's College in the University of Toronto and the Canadian Catholic Bioethics Institute.

This year's event was held on October 10th and the theme was "Holistic Health: The Spiritual Dimension". We were welcomed by Dr. Moira McQueen of The Canadian Catholic Bioethics Institute. Margaret Ann Jacobs, National CWL Past President paid tribute to Moira Ste. Marie and CWL greetings.

The first speaker was **Nancy Lefebre**, chief clinical executive and senior vice-president at St. Elizabeth Healthcare. Lefebre spoke on the experience of existing spiritual care at St. Elizabeth in the context of today's society. In her view, we must care for the community by going back to the future: health care in the future must be done in cooperation and with the aid of the whole community as it was done 100 years ago. Society is beginning to realize the importance of spirituality in end of life care as it pertains to the secular health care settings.

St. Elizabeth Healthcare provides 20,000 home visits per day. Twenty years ago they started a spiritual home care program because they saw the advantage of such a program to the well being of the patient. Research by Holyoke and Stephenson (attached) provided nine principles of a spiritual care program. One of the most important is a sustaining relationship with the caregiver, the patient and the health professional.

St. Elizabeth Healthcare implements this principle through their H.O.P.E. program (Home, Opportunity, Power of People and Environment). This program has self-directed teams (for built-in flexibility), ensures a comprehensive client and family centered program. It also maintains informed community supports as well as a knowledge network. More information can be found at knowledge@sehc.com

The second speaker was **Dr. Judith Shamian**, past-president international of the Council of Nurses and former CEO of the Victorian Order of Nurses (VON). Dr. Shamian spoke on the gaps in health care policy and strategies for reclaiming the spiritual dimension. Dr. Shamian reminded us that Pope Francis called nurses "experts in humanity". Dr. Shamian brought up the United Nations' sustainable goals for 2030 and made us realize that spirituality is not listed anywhere in the list. In her view, spirituality is something that all can experience, helps us find meaning and purpose in the things we value, can bring us hope in times of suffering and loss and encourages us to look ahead.

She sees a dichotomy or division between the scientific and biomedical world and the holistic world. This creates a source of conflict between policy and practice. How do we reclaim the spiritual dimension in policy influence? She provided us with her eight steps:

1. Information gathering, research and situational analysis (all which cost money)
2. Resolutions and position statements
3. Working with others in the field
4. Use public opinion and stories
5. Conduct personal meetings and lobbying
6. Work with the media
7. Use social media to better effect
8. Compromise if possible.

Our last speaker of the evening was **Fr. Mark Miller**, Redemptorist Bioethics Consultant. Fr. Mark reminded us that Jesus gave the apostles two directives: proclaim the Gospel and heal the sick. Healing does not always mean curing.

Medical specialist train to deal with specific parts of the body. What are needed are health professionals who see the whole patient. He told us that the biggest issue facing society at this moment is loneliness. Fr. Mark related his experience in Saskatoon with providing innovative possibilities for spiritual

care in faith communities. He brought his experience with the Parish Home Ministry of Care Program and the use of Parish nurses. Holistic care meets all the standards in context of community and puts the patient's needs first.

At the end of the three presentations, Mary Hawkley, life member, moderated a great question and answer forum between the audience and the three speakers.

Recommendation: This lecture series is a great example of how the CWL can bridge the community and faith spheres. I spoke afterwards with some audience members, who were not CWL members (or even Catholic) and came because they were interested in the topic. Councils in the province should consider having one of these events in their parish and invite the larger community to it. As Dr. Shamian pointed out it is one way of reclaiming the spiritual dimension in public policy.