



## Canadian Association for Parish Nursing Ministry

On behalf of the Canadian Association for Parish Nursing Ministry (CAPNM) I would like to introduce you to a new, yet old, ministry concept that is helping churches reclaim their Healing ministries. The following story is one of many possible scenarios Parish Nurses face on a daily basis.

It's Sunday morning and parishioners have gathered together at the Community church to worship. One woman in particular, Linda, has come carrying a very heavy burden. She has just had her annual checkup and the doctor has found a small lump in her right breast.. She is scheduled for a biopsy within the next two weeks. She sits in her seat but few around her notice the anxious look on her face. Standing in the back of the church is Ann, the church's Parish Nurse. She notices Linda and the concern on her face which is unusual for this bubbly mother of three. Before the service ends, Linda leaves in tears and Ann follows her out. Over the next half hour Ann listens as Linda cries and voices her fears and questions. Ann offers comfort, a listening ear and gathers accurate information from a trustworthy health website. She answers Linda's questions to the best of her abilities and promises to get answers she is unsure of. Linda thanks Ann for prayer and helping lift her spirits. Thus starts a journey of support and care that will deepen as this story unfolds.

Parish Nursing began in Europe then came to the USA in the 1980's, Canada in the 1990's, and is now in many other countries around the world. A Parish Nurse is a Registered Nurse with specialized knowledge, who is called to ministry and affirmed by a faith community to promote health, healing, and wholeness. Research shows that healing of the whole person is associated with better health outcomes and improved quality of life. (see references)

Parishioners and Clergy have said the following: *'You feel you have someone to call, talk to, and pray with',...* *'It helps to be able to talk personally about health issues –sometimes others don't understand',...* *'She seeks out the isolated',...* *'She helped us find a doctor who would accept new patients and gave advice for my elderly father',...* *'Important member of a ministry team'.*

Parish Nurses are employed by faith communities of various denominations all across Canada. Their health and healing ministries are built upon the link between the body, mind and spirit. The role of the parish nurse is to promote the integration of faith and health in a variety of ways that reflect the context of the faith community such as health education, health counseling, health advocacy, resource referral and equipping volunteers.

CAPNM is a member of the Canadian Network of Nursing Specialties and as such can access resources available through the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA). In 2010 CNA produced a position statement on Spirituality, Health and Nursing Practice, as it believes that nurses, through their practice are uniquely situated to ensure that an individual's spiritual values, beliefs and experiences are taken into account. Parish Nurses assisted in the creation of this document.

Any individual who supports parish nursing ministry can become a member of CAPNM and be involved with the work of the association. For further information please visit our website [www.capnm.ca](http://www.capnm.ca)

- Membership and Visibility Committee, CAPNM 2013

## **References**

George, L.K., Ellison, C.G. and Larson, D.B. *Explaining the Relationships between Religious Involvement and Health*. Psychological Inquiry, 13(3), 2002. Pp. 190-200

Canadian Nurses Association Position Statement: Spirituality, Health and Nursing Practice, 2010. Accessed April 18, 2013 from [http://www2.cna-alic.ca/CNA/documents/pdf/publications/PS111\\_Spirituality\\_2010\\_2.pdf](http://www2.cna-alic.ca/CNA/documents/pdf/publications/PS111_Spirituality_2010_2.pdf)