

Sacred Stories

There's No Place Like Home



spirituality

Suggested Sacred Text

Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing so some people have entertained angels without even knowing it.

Hebrews 13:2

Michelle got the phone call on a Saturday morning. Her father, Donn, asked Michelle to come home because her mom, LaVerne, wasn't doing well. LaVerne was in the advanced stages of Alzheimer's disease, and her doctor thought she would not live much longer.

Michelle drove from her home in Fargo to her parents' home in Garrison. When Michelle walked into her mom's hospital room at CHI St. Alexius Health Garrison, her dad greeted her and motioned for Michelle to sit next to LaVerne and hold her hand. LaVerne squeezed her daughter's

hand, instantly transporting Michelle back to the days when they would walk, hand in hand, up the alley to church

Michelle was blessed to have three days with LaVerne before she was called to heaven. Later, Michelle told me that during that time, she witnessed love, compassion, dignity, and sincere gentleness and respect in the care provided to her mom.

"The aides and nurses who attended to my mom's every need did so with such grace and compassion," she said. "They took time to visit with dad and me, to reassure us that mom could hear us and that she was happy we were there. They were so gentle and patient, preserving her dignity and reassuring her."

When Michelle's mom took her last breath, she was surrounded by family, but also nurses, aides and spiritual caregivers. "Not only did they

comfort mom, they enveloped my dad and me in love and hugs,” Michelle said. “They formed a prayer circle over mom and prayed with us. They cried for her and for our family. They listened to us as we talked of mom. As sorrowful as it was, there was true joy in the moment as a result of their selfless actions.”

Michelle’s story reveals the sacred opportunities in a culture and workplace that intentionally invites spirituality to permeate our work. Each encounter is an opportunity to bring God’s own gaze, full of tenderness and compassion, to those who are suffering. At first glance, any hospital may seem cold, clinical and impersonal. But upon entering our doors, patients and their families are

received with hospitality and experience the warm, compassionate and healing environment created by our staff.

That environment is also a reflection of Garrison, a small and caring community. As Michelle said, “Your hospital and the community of Garrison were an inspiration and a gift to me and my family during my mom’s journey from life on earth to life everlasting. There’s no place like home. Thank you and God bless you all.”

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Questions for Reflection

At what point did you become aware that your spirituality is welcomed in the work you do?

How is listening to the story of a patient, family member, or coworker essential to our mission?