CommonSpirit

Sacred Stories

As CommonSpirit Health, we make the healing presence of God known in our world by improving the health of the people we serve, especially those who are vulnerable, while we advance social justice for all.

Compassion Inclusion Integrity Excellence Collaboration

Sacred Stories convey ways our mission is being lived out by the gifted people in our ministry. We invite you to use these stories for inspiration, as a meeting reflection, or to encourage discussion with your team.

Life and Death

TEXT

"The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news …to give them a garland instead of ashes."
– Isaiah 61: 1, 3 NRSV

SACRED STORY

I had an experience years ago that continues to remind me why I became a nurse and how much the "little things" we do can affect others' lives.

Working the night shift in our obstetrics unit, I met a patient I'll call Jill. An elementary school teacher, she and her husband, "John," were having their first child.

As I became acquainted with them, I learned that John's father was also a patient, near death after a battle with cancer. John was torn up about who needed him more: Jill, who was about to deliver their baby; or his mother, father and family.

I reassured him that whenever he needed to be with his father, I would stay at Jill's bedside and that we would call him right back if Jill needed him.

Throughout the night, John and I took turns being with Jill so that he could make several trips to his father's bedside. The couple's baby girl arrived just after 4:00 a.m., beautiful and healthy. As I held her, I looked at Jill, John and the attending physician. I asked if John and I could take the baby to meet her grandfather. They all agreed. John and I wrapped the precious bundle and took her to meet her grandpa.

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SACRED STORY CONTINUED

John's father was surrounded by family. Though his breathing was labored, I felt him relax as we took his hand to help him touch his granddaughter. It was as though God had His hand in that moment. We stayed only a few minutes before returning with the baby to Jill's bedside. John's father died about two hours later. It seemed that the whole family could accept his death more easily, knowing that life had been carried on through the birth of this precious baby girl.

Five years later, I received a card from Jill. She wrote that she became a registered nurse in a pediatric unit and believed it was a perfect fit with her elementary education background. She said that in nursing class she had used our story for one of her personal experience speeches. She wanted me to know that she changed her career because of one night with one nurse who made a difference.

From the Sacred Stories Archive and submitted by

Lisa Dolezal, RN

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

Why did you start working in health care?

Reflect on "God's hand" in your daily work. How can you make known God's healing presence for others?