

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.

I Have Seen the Face of God

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“So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them...”

TEXT

- Genesis 1:27a NRSV

Faith community nurses are registered nurses whose work centers on a parish, church or community organization, rather than in a hospital or doctor’s office. Literally meeting people where they are, these nurses focus on care of the spirit as well as holistic health and prevention of illness and injury. We have six faith community nursing programs throughout our ministry. Here is an example of how their work touches both the body and spirit of their patients – as well as themselves.

One afternoon, I received a call from a coworker whom I’ll call Father Tim. He was concerned about a gentleman he often saw in the neighborhood. All that Father Tim really knew about this man, whom I’ll call “Gus,” was that he lived above one of the neighborhood bars,

was in poor health and was a very nice man. “Gus is about my age,” said Father Tim, who was 72. “This morning, he said that if he’d had all of his medications last night, he would have taken them to end it all. Can you help him?”

SACRED STORY

When I arrived at the bar, a tall, thin gentleman with a scruffy beard and slightly graying bushy hair met me. When I asked, “Gus?” he smiled. He confirmed that he was so depressed that he would have ended his life the night before except he didn’t have the means. Gus was willing to go to the hospital. On the way, he told me that he was 57 years old, but he looked every bit of the 72 years Father Tim described – the result of years of drug and alcohol abuse. He also had heart disease.

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I Have Seen the Face of God

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There was something special about this man that touched my heart and soul deeply; why, I did not yet know. When we arrived at the hospital, he refused to use a wheelchair. I had the feeling he was afraid that I would abandon him if I left to find a wheelchair. When we arrived at the Emergency Department (ED) triage desk, Gus said, “I can’t stand anymore; I am going to fall.” Two women in the waiting room helped me hold him up while the receptionist got a wheelchair.

The triage nurse checked his vital signs and took a brief history before whisking him to the critical care area of the ED.

She then took me to see the ED social worker. The nurse said to the social worker, “You know it takes a lot for someone to tug at my heart, but this man surely does.”

Later, as I sat in the waiting room, I reflected on my short time with Gus. What was it about him that filled me with a peace beyond my understanding? I thought of what the nurse said, and suddenly I knew – I had seen the face of God in this seemingly broken, yet very kind and gentle man. May he be blessed for the gift he is to others.

From the Sacred Stories Archive

SACRED STORY
CONTINUED

What is it about Gus and the people in our own lives who “fill us with a peace beyond our understanding”? Have you experienced people like that in your ministry?

QUESTIONS FOR
REFLECTION

In which seemingly broken persons do you see the face of God?
How do you respond?