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Spirituality in Clinical Practice

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Remember Your Blessings

As a believer in Christ, being a Christian is a part of me in every way, shape, and form. Every day I reflect on how blessed I am to be able to have all my faculties in order, just to be able to have breath in my body is a blessing. This year, the year of 2020, the year of COVID-19, this year has been and still is extremely disheartening for others and myself. When I think back to how the year begun and now how the year is ending, I must say in the midst of chaos, God is still the same: yesterday, today, and forever. Nurses this year were tested, but also young aspiring nurses were tested as well, learning and training in a field dismantled by COVID-19. Even in the pandemic, nursing students such as myself were blessed for a short time to have clinical, a necessary experience that brings more meaning to my Christian walk.

During this semester of clinical, I was able to train at Montefiore Medical Hospital Nyack location. I came across many different patients with different ailments. One patient had alcohol withdrawal, another had an intellectual disability, and another with early onset dementia. Drugs such as alcohol can become extremely addicting to many individuals; my patient was one of them. When I was assigned to help oversee her care, she was in the initial stages of alcohol withdrawal. CIWAA, which stands for Clinical Institute Withdrawal Assessment for Alcohol, is an assessment tool to measure how far an individual is in the

withdrawal stages. While talking to my patient, I learned that she was a very creative person, a daughter, a mother, a significant other, and a friend. The ambition in her eyes when she spoke of the things she aspired to do in life was lit like a fire. However, unfortunately, she allowed alcohol to become her driving source of energy, her preferred choice for copping, ultimately her crutch. As a Christian I could not help but to think if she knew Jesus Christ as her Lord and Savior. She did not appear to be religious and as a student I have learned overtime that some people are open to talking about their beliefs, while others choose to refrain from such conversation. As a Christian, my best option was to say a small prayer for her on my own time. Praying that this addiction to alcohol be broken, that she may find the joy in living sober again and more importantly finding Jesus Christ. Sad it was, to watch a beautiful soul be swallowed up by the things of this world.

Whenever I wake up, in my morning whispers to God I always say “Lord, thank you for waking me up in my right mind, right body, and right spirit.” For my patient who is intellectually disabled, I only wish he could say the same. I never understood why some people were born with ailments such as intellectual disability. God makes no mistakes and His ways are not my ways, so I assume the real gift is life and our appreciation for it. This patient of mine had a lot of personality even though we could not communicate with words. After providing morning care, after I washed his face with a warm towel, being sure to take my time while cleaning his eyes, the smile on his face afterwards was priceless. His mood and appreciation exuded from the hospital bed. Feeding him was a joy, and

even though he was unable to care and feed himself, he still had goodness in him. God works in mysterious ways, and while life may be stressful, it is times like those where I can only say “thank you Lord, I don’t deserve it but I thank you!”

Dementia, a brain deteriorating disease that causes the very essence of a person to disappear. My patient, in spite of her memory fading, she was a joy to be around. There were times when I could tell she knew she could not remember or recall as she would like to but it did not stop her from smiling. A pleasant soul indeed, secretly confused and saddened by the loss of her memory. I believe God can heal her if that is what she truly wanted, but even then, it is a constant reminder to those, like myself, that are in our right minds to use our minds. Use our minds to do good, to spread the love of Jesus Christ everywhere we go, because tomorrow is not promised to any man.

Clinical is a teaching platform: mentally, physically, and spiritually. I find that my spirit is always strengthened with every experience I am blessed to receive. While Jesus Christ was walking the earth, one of the main things he did was heal the sick. Whether it was Him laying hands or someone touching the helm of His garment, Jesus was and is a healer. Lives lost due to COVID, many may say God does not care, or question why He would allow His people to go through a pandemic? If we just take a step back, those of us who are alive, those who have overcame COVID or any illness during this year; we must not be distracted to our own victories. What the enemy meant for evil, God will always turn it around for our good. Remember your blessings, remember God is always in control.