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Spiritual Care at the End of Life

The Chaplain as a 'Hopeful Presence'

Steve Nolan

Foreword by Dr Rowan Williams

November 2011 160pp ISBN: 9781849051996 pb £17.99

'This book is written by someone who knows only too well the distress and turmoil of those adapting to the knowledge that their life is short. He also knows how people fluctuate in their acceptance of death approaching and yet wish to live. Cicely Saunders said that 'dignity is having a sense of personal worth'... The author's experience of 'being there', advocating for patients and giving voice to those who feel they are becoming voiceless underpin his writings. His remit concerns spirituality and personhood far more than any particular religious faith. His work is truly uplifting as it restores the essence of being.'

- Baroness Ilora Finlay, Professor of Palliative Medicine and Independent Crossbench member of the House of Lords

'Accessible, engaging and informative a compelling read, striking at the heart of what is important to those who are dying. Complex and sensitive issues explored with honesty, sensitivity and integrity. This book has the potential to transform how matters of death, dying and spirituality are addressed by all those providing end of life care.'

- Wilf McSherry, Professor of Dignity in Care for Older People, Staffordshire University and The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust

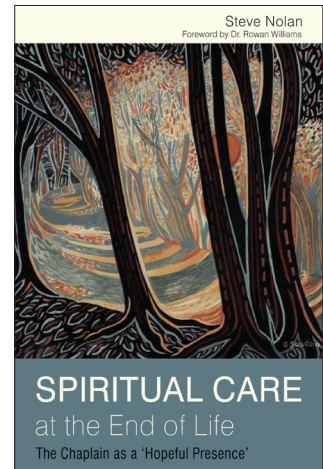
Chaplains in healthcare settings offer patients spiritual care that involves companionship, counselling and maintaining hope. This is particularly important at the point where a patient has run out of treatment possibilities. This book reflects creatively on the work that chaplains do with people who are dying and the unique quality of the relationship that palliative care professionals construct with patients at the end of life.

Based on qualitative research with practising palliative care chaplains, *Spiritual Care at the End of Life* explores the nature of hope in its different forms at different stages of terminal illness, and asks how chaplains can help dying people to be hopeful even when facing the inevitability of their death. The book identifies key moments in this relationship, from the person's initial reaction to the chaplain, to the chaplain becoming an accompanying presence and creating the potential to provide comfort, strength and "hope in the present".

This thoughtful and inquisitive book investigates the underlying theory that spiritual care is rooted in relationship. It has implications for practice in the work of chaplains, counsellors and all healthcare professionals supporting people who are dying.

Steve Nolan, Ph.D., is a palliative care chaplain at Princess Alice Hospice, Surrey, UK, where he works daily with people who are dying, supporting them and their families. He regularly teaches spiritual care to students visiting the hospice and is a tutor on the MTh in Chaplaincy Studies at St. Michael's College, Llandaff, part of Cardiff University.

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