

The Role of Faith in Crisis Chaplaincy
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4/20/2013

As a chaplain, no one being helped needs to know or even cares what my own religion is. They don't ask. They see The Chaplain as they expect a chaplain to be. I do my best to find the language of service that supports them and makes sense to them in the moment. This is where I most often recognize the Goddess at work, as extemporaneous prayer has never been my *forte*. She gives me the words when I need them.

I have had positive response to concepts like:

- Peace; Peace be with you
- God is here with us, now, in this place, even (as if) in the air we breathe
- Be. Be here. Be here now. (in crisis, people dither frantically about the past or the future; bringing them gently to ground and center involves calling them -- by name -- to this place and moment, often over and over again.)
- Breathe. When you breathe out, relax all your muscles and let your breath carry away whatever you don't need right now. Breathe in, and let the air fill you, sustain you (and fill you with God's Presence). [Repeat]
- May I get you a drink of water?
- Your (behavior, response, tears, ...) are the very human response to ...
- You are where you need to be
- You are in good hands...

My theology of chaplaincy involves the concept of Home. I ground, center, and so forth to be at home in the chaos I am about to enter. I am at home, safe, relaxed, and confident because the Lady is with me. I try to carry this as an umbrella of at-home-ness to shelter others. I am reaching back into our humanness for the ancient, embedded rituals of hospitality, welcoming others to shelter but also recognizing that, by inviting me into their crisis, they are welcoming me into their very private homes. I think this is where our common religion as humans has much to offer.

Truly, in a crisis, more complicated religious concepts just don't have a place. We are down to basic needs of safety, shelter, sustenance.