

15<sup>th</sup> Consultation  
European Network of Health Care Chaplaincy  
Belgium, Blankenberge, 15-19 June 2018



## LECTURES

### *Nurturing Spirituality in Healthcare Chaplaincy*



#### **A change in one changed the other: belief and praxis in pediatric chaplaincy**

**Daniel Grosseohme**

Associate Professor, Staff Chaplain, Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, USA

Reflecting on 25 years of pediatric chaplaincy, this talk examines how beliefs and experience affect and nurture each other. The foci will be centered on four themes: asking and loving the questions; prayer and expectations of the Divine; strength and resilience; and revelation and identity. I've come to learn to love the questions. There are the theologians we read in seminary, and then there are those opportunities to grapple with theology at the bedside. Some people are distressed when old ways of believing are no longer helpful to them. Others are distressed by even questioning the Divine. Part of being a child or adolescent is having a body and mind that change and develop — why should our spiritual selves not also grow and develop? Sitting with adolescents and adults in distress from asking, Why? Why my child? Have I committed the unforgivable sin? Will you offer a prayer or ritual to reconnect me to God? has led me to the sense that God is bigger than we give God credit for, and is beyond what we have words for.

Getting to the point where I could consider integrating two seemingly disparate contexts — the science of medicine and the work of theological reflection, has not been an easy path. It has been through seeking revelation, whether through clinical conversations with an adolescent or through research, that I have come to experience a sense of awe for God, and a sense of intimacy with God.