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LOURDES
SENIOR COMMUNITY

FALL 2010

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the continuum ...

Connections Between Religion and Successful Aging?

Excerpt from Religion and Aging by Peggy Koopman-Boyden, Te Kura Kete Aronui, University of Waikato

Most of us are aware that societies worldwide are aging. One of the central issues for gerontologists is to uncover what behaviors might extend life, and what enables us to age successfully. We already know a great deal about the need for exercising the body, as a way of living a better old age (or any age). There is also considerable research on

the prevention of disability, and how changes in life style, environment and medical care can prevent it.

Can we say that exercise of the soul will give us a healthier and happier old age? Do religious people live longer? Do they have a happier life?

If we see aging and old age as a stressful time, then does religion help? The answer is yes, at least according to

research done in the USA. The link applies to those of various religious faiths, and has also been found in a nationwide sample of older Black Americans where the negative effects of stress were found to be counterbalanced by religious involvement (Krause and Tran, 1989). Religion seems to be an especially powerful buffer against stress among elderly people, "the happiest of senior citizens are those who are actively religious" (Myers, 1992:75). Among adults participating in the Baltimore Longitudinal Study of Aging, they were found to use religious

coping mechanisms frequently when dealing with health-related stress, even more frequently than getting involved in social activities, or staying busy (McCrae & Costa, 1986). In brief, those who exercise their soul are less likely to be stressed in old age.

And of all the religious coping mechanisms available to older people, prayer and turning to the deity for support are the most often used mechanisms when the problem is physical, social, economic, or medical (Koenig, George, and Siegler, 1988). This holds true for people of different ethnic groups, different socioeconomic statuses, and widely varying levels of education. We can also say that the ritualistic side of religion is seen to counter the chaos, distress, ambiguity and randomness of life experienced by older people. The ritual and ceremony of religion conveys a sense of predictability and mastery, and counters the upheavals older people may be experiencing. Furthermore, because the ritual of religion usually involves people in an active sense with outcomes of capability, mastery and control, these help to enhance the older person's self-esteem.

There is also a positive association between religion and various health indicators, such as hypertension and cancer. This has been shown in over 200 empirical studies reviewed by Levin (1994), and while there are

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In this issue of the Continuum we are highlighting, "Religion, Spirituality and Aging." Lourdes has always treated each person as an individual, a special person consisting of mind, body and spirit. As we as persons grow in age and wisdom, life experiences teach us that the care of a spiritual self is equally as important as the physical self. Sister Frances Mary leads a team of Pastoral Care staff, students, volunteers and priests from campus to coordinate care and services to meet the needs of the residents and their families and loved ones.



Lourdes Senior Community is blessed to have these persons who are with our residents as they live out their faith and explore their spirituality. Read more about our program throughout this issue. If you have any questions or would like to volunteer with our Pastoral Care Program, please call (248) 674-2241 extension 415.

I cannot end without a special thank you to all who made Lourdes Senior Community's 9th Annual Golf Outing a grand event. Led by Dan Callan, the golf committee truly did "Jamaica Me" and everyone else happy! This year we were blessed with beautiful weather for the over 200 in attendance. The Jamaican epicure was scrumptiously prepared by Kim Barzda and her team from Mendelson Assisted Living Home. The generosity of our donors and guests was inspiring and so very much appreciated. This is another example of how blessed Lourdes Senior Community is. As plans begin for next year's outing I cannot imagine how the committee will outdo themselves - but I have faith that they will.

Next year, we will be celebrating the 10th Annual Golf Outing and we invite all to attend on June 23, 2011. Please mark your calendar. Watch for more information in the next issues of The Continuum. Until then, may your days continue to be blessed as your feast day comes - saints that you are.

Sister Maureen Comer, OP

Sister Maureen Comer, OP
Chief Executive Officer

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methodological problems in many of these studies, the causal relationship is clear. Furthermore, studies of older adults and in particular mental health indicate that religious beliefs, attitudes and coping behaviors can help with adjustment to depression, suicide, anxiety and alcohol abuse (Krause, 1991).

We do not know if the religious actually live longer than the non-religious, but there seems little doubt that the powerful effects of religious faith among older people go far beyond just feeling good - it seems that religion, by offering a sense of meaning, control, and self-esteem, helps in coping with the stress of old age and in supporting an optimistic outlook. This in turn helps people deal constructively with their lives.

So, while there are many factors which can contribute to a long life, religion or spirituality does appear to be a key factor. Relatively little research has pursued the connection between religion and aging, despite the reality that a large proportion of the population (especially older people) has an interest in the spiritual dimension. From a research point of view, the connection between religion and ageing is largely unmapped, but holds great promise for improving the quality of life. It might also be that from a theologian's point of view, the possibility of a positive impact of religion on aging could become a trendy marketing tool to a population increasingly interested in ways of successfully aging.

wish list

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Lourdes Senior Community
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Office: 248-674-2241 ext. 450

To make a donation, please use the enclosed envelope.

thank you

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 (248) 674-2241 EXT. 452.**

2010 GOLF FOR LOURDES

Thank you to all who participated in Lourdes Senior Community's golf outing and Jamaica Me Happy Party. This year we were blessed to have exceeded last year's results of \$46,000. The funds will go toward supporting the Alzheimer's and other dementia programs that we are privileged to provide to our residents, family members and staff. The proceeds also include a special designation to help purchase a new bus. That auction raised \$6,500.

With the 9th annual Golf for Lourdes outing a warm memory, let us look forward to the 10th annual event on June 23, 2011. Please – mark your calendars and plan to join us again!

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RESIDENT VOLUNTEERS HELP WITH SPIRITUAL CARE

While there are many volunteers who come to Lourdes to help with the religious and spiritual programs, some do not need to come far. Lourdes Senior Community has a number of volunteers who live right here. Many Fox Manor residents help provide programs.

On days when Mass is not available at Mendelson Home, the residents gather for a Communion Service. Each Tuesday, Hal Holden, a Fox Manor resident, walks

to Mendelson to lead this Communion Service. He also distributes communion to those who are not able to attend the service.

On Mondays, Miriam Best and Mary Methner, also Fox Manor residents, go to Clausen Manor. There they lead the residents in reciting the Rosary. This is when you can really see the full miracle of the Rosary. Often residents of Clausen Manor are unable to remember names

but the words of the rosary are easily recalled and recited. Many of those who sit and recite the Rosary find comfort in the prayers.

Other volunteers from Fox Manor include Miriam Best and Hilda Murray who help prepare the altar at Fox Manor before Mass every Wednesday and Sunday. Vince Groth, Hal Holden and Helen Suchara volunteer to lector at Fox Manor Masses.



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PASTORAL CARE IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF LSC

As a retirement community, Lourdes has always seen the residents as spiritual persons and through Pastoral Care we strive to address this part of the person. Today, the Pastoral Care Team is led by Sister Frances Mary who works with three chaplains, seminarians from St. Cyril and Methodius at Orchard Lake Seminary, campus priests, and volunteers. This team is here to ensure people receive the spiritual and religious support they want and need at this time of their lives. This support also stretches beyond the residents to include the families, loved ones and staff.

The almost 200 Catholics living at Lourdes Senior Community are able to continue to practice their Catholic faith through the services offered by the priests who call Lourdes home. Since 2003, Lourdes Senior Community's chaplain has been Father James O'Hagan. Father O'Hagan was granted senior

priest status with the Archdiocese of Detroit prior to moving to Lourdes but he never stopped serving the people of the Archdiocese. He first lived at Fox Manor where he quickly began to assist Father Krieg, the previous chaplain, with Masses, anointings and more. When Father Krieg became ill, Father O'Hagan was happy to continue to fulfill his calling as a priest. Today, at almost 88 years of age he continues to offer Mass throughout Lourdes Senior Community five days a week. Father O'Hagan is available for confessions, Anointing of the Sick and to provide comfort where needed.

In addition to Father O'Hagan, we have three other Archdiocesan priests who live at Lourdes Senior Community. They all

continue to live the life they chose as young men when they were ordained. Fathers John Dunn, Larry Siroskey and Tom Kirwan help in their respective facilities with weekly Mass. Father Bart Kraemer, a Benedictine, and Father Nemeth, a Jesuit, also call Lourdes home.

We are fortunate to meet and work
continued on back cover



A Great Place to Call



PRAYER FOR THE QUARTER

Father, Mother, God,
Thank you for your presence during the hard and mean days.
For then we have you to lean upon.
Thank you for your presence during the bright and sunny days,
for then we can share that which we have with those who have less.
And thank you for your presence during the Holy Days, for then we are able
to celebrate you and our families and our friends.
For those who have no voice, we ask you to speak.
For those who feel unworthy,
we ask you to pour your love out in waterfalls of tenderness.
For those who live in pain,
we ask you to bathe them in the river of your healing.
For those who are lonely, we ask you to keep them company.
For those who are depressed, we ask you to shower upon them the light of hope.
Dear Creator, You, the borderless sea of substance, we ask you to give to all the
world that which we need most—Peace.

- Maya Angelou

continued from page 3

with seminarians from St. Cyril and Methodius Seminary of Orchard Lake. Sister Frances Mary works with these young men as part of their studies to become priests. Seminarians assist at Mass and visit residents. The youth and diversity they bring is much appreciated by the residents.

In addition to the Catholic services, we offer non-denominational and other religious services to the residents of Lourdes Senior Community. Each facility works with the chaplains and volunteers to help meet all the religious needs of the residents and their families.

We recognize how blessed we are to not just be called a Catholic facility but to be a practicing Catholic community where a focus on the whole person is at the forefront of care.