



Dear NACN Canada members,

Heartfelt wishes for a very Merry and Blessed Christmas and Joyful New Year!

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you for your support, and commitment to NACN- Canada. The past year saw a few activities towards the achievement of our mission. I know that together we can do more. We are excited about launching our website that will allow us to share and communicate more.

I trust that in the coming year 2020, the Lord will continue to bless and guide us with a renewed commitment to our mission. Your strengths and talents as well as your support for increased membership are vital to support our mission - to strengthen the vocation of nurses and other health professionals within the apostolic tradition of the Catholic Church.

I look forward to working with you and many more potential members in the New Year!

Love and Prayers,

Freida

Freida Chavez, RN, MHSc, DNP, FAAN

President NACN Canada

All positions on our board expire after two years. We encourage you to run for election for the positions open in 2020. To enter your name on the ballot, write to nacncanada.boardcontact@gmail.com by January 29, 2020 at 2400 h.

The President-elect position is open to General Members who joined NACN-Canada on June 28, 2018. The current President-elect is not eligible to run for election.

The President-elect shall:

1. Assume all duties in the absence of the President.
2. Perform such duties as are assigned by the President or the Board of Directors.
3. Attend all meetings of the Board of Directors and the Association.
4. Give verbal reports of the duties/activities of the position, as appropriate, at all meetings of the Board of Directors, and any other meetings of the Association as a whole.
5. Prepare a written Annual Summary Report prior to the end of June each year and additionally at the request of the President/Board of Directors.
6. Serve as Chairperson of the By-Laws Committee.
7. Work with the President and other members of the Board of Directors to develop the Action Plan and Budget of the Association and facilitate its implementation.

The Corresponding Secretary position is open to those who have been General Members for at least one year. The current Corresponding Secretary is eligible to run for re-election.

The Corresponding Secretary shall:

1. Attend all meetings of the Board of Directors and the Association.
2. Serve as a communication liaison between the Board of Directors and the members of the Association through written correspondence via the postal service/post office box of the Association, and electronic mail (email) as appropriate.
3. Accesses the Association's electronic email box (nacn.canada@gmail.com) at least weekly (daily if possible) and responds to or forwards emails to the appropriate board member.
4. Send mass electronic email messages to membership per the request of the President, Board of Directors, committees of the Association the membership, and Affiliated Councils as appropriate and approved by the President or a designee.
5. Distribute information about the Association to prospective members through mail, email, the Newsletter, the Association website (in collaboration with the Recording Secretary), and Social Media.
6. Assist with general reminder notices for membership renewals in collaboration with the Recording Secretary through email and postings on the Association website at the beginning of January.
8. Facilitate communications for posting on the NACN-Canada (ANIC-Canada) website and other appropriate forms of publicity available to the Association membership and the Catholic community.
9. Give verbal reports of the duties/activities of the position, at meetings of the Board of Directors and any other meetings of the Association.

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10. Prepare an electronic/ written Annual Summary Report prior to the end of June each year and at the request of the President/Board of Directors.

11. Work with the President and other members of the Board of Directors to develop the Action Plan and Budget of the Association and facilitate document implementation, as appropriate.

12. After June of each fiscal year, file documents electronically for archiving.

Election of up to two regional director is possible in even numbered years under our statutes. Nurses outside of Ontario might consider participating in the NACN-Canada board by running for election to one of these positions.

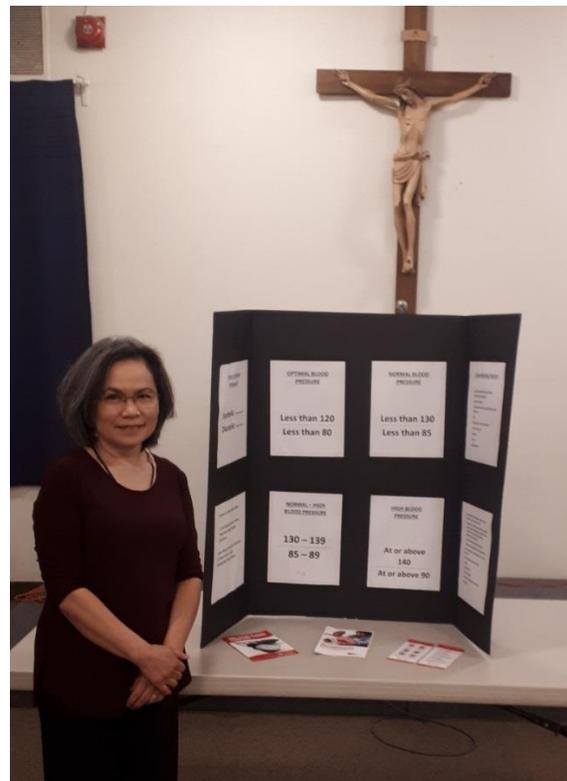
NACN-Canada Annual General Meeting, November 11, 2019



NACN-Canada's Annual General Meeting was held on Nov. 11, 2019, on the evening of a snow storm, at the Newman Centre, 89 St. George St., Toronto following Mass celebrated by our chaplain, Fr Peter Turrone.

Terry McDermott, RN, Parish Nurse and member of NACN-Canada, gave a moving address at the meeting. She has kindly shared the text of her address on the following pages.

Terry is shown here at a 2019 parish blood pressure clinic



Bearing Witness to the Dignity and Value of Life in Nursing Practice

A discussion on this topic begins with a definition of dignity. As Catholic nurses, our point of reference is the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: “The dignity of the human person is rooted in his creation in the image and likeness of God.” (CCC 1700) Furthermore, we remember that we are created body and soul; that is our God-given nature. When we bear witness to the dignity and nature bestowed upon all people, we bear witness to God.

In my nursing career, several experiences have challenged my Catholic faith. I believe that it is only by the grace of God that I have been able to defend Catholic beliefs in the face of opposition.

As a student, during a discussion in which I opined that nurses should be allowed to refuse assisting with therapeutic abortions, the ethics instructor told me to leave my religious beliefs at home. Although a few students eventually told me they agreed with me, no one else was willing to publicly defend their pro-life beliefs.

As a staff nurse in the late 1980’s, I refused to float to Labour and Delivery to monitor a patient undergoing a therapeutic abortion. In front of staff and patients, the Charge Nurse and Director of Nursing loudly tried to intimidate me into assisting with the abortion. Although I was frightened of the possible consequences, I steadfastly refused. I believe what saved my job that day was a colleague who volunteered to go in my place.

Many years later, as a visiting nurse working in the community, at the end of a district meeting in a Catholic church basement, a colleague saw me genuflecting to the Blessed Sacrament as I left. He jeered at this discovery and proceeded to tell me everything he thought was wrong with the Catholic Church. I replied that I held my beliefs strongly and was not willing to engage in an argument.

Since the legalization of MAiD in 2016, a number of my patients in the community have asked for more information on medical aid in dying, how it works, how to access the procedure, or for a referral to a physician who will kill them. Each time, I refuse to cooperate, choosing instead to ask why they think MAiD is the best solution in their circumstance.

My most valued nursing certification is in Parish Nursing Ministry. My certification through St. Peter’s Catholic Seminary in London, Ontario enables me to use my professional skills outside of my current employment and contribute, in a limited capacity, to the community life of my parish. Until recently, I belonged to a Christian parish nurse support group in my area. One of the members organized a webinar that would instruct us on how to help our parish nursing ministry patients choose suitable music that would provide a peaceful ambience as they died by MAiD. I wrote a letter of objection, reminding the entire group of Christian nurses that assisted suicide contravenes the 5th Commandment and we cannot comply. The response from the group was disappointing. Overwhelmingly, the group believed that our patients’ desires supersede our beliefs and our patients come first. With no support from my parish nursing colleagues, I withdrew from the group.

Incidents such as these where we oppose popular, secular expectations and opinion, are only one way in which we bear witness to the dignity and value of human life. Many other opportunities present themselves in our professional lives.

When in conversation with our patients, we can look and listen for cues that the patient is Christian. For instance, is there a rosary, a bible, devotional book, prayer card, crucifix in their home or by their bedside? Does the patient say anything that is faith-related? Taking our cue from the patient, we can say something simple but meaningful such as “God bless you” as we leave them. In my experience, this simple prayer can give a patient much-needed hope.

I have occasionally prayed with a patient and sometimes also with their family. Prayer is another way in which we give witness. The wife of a patient - both of them Catholic - was distraught as she shared with me that her husband expressed a desire for physician assisted death. During a routine visit, providentially on World Day of Prayer for the Sick, I asked both patient and wife if they would like to pray with me. They agreed and I read the *Anima Christi* prayer. At the end, the wife cried saying that she had never heard such a beautiful prayer. The patient, with great difficulty, made a very awkward Sign of the Cross. Also with great difficulty caused by aphasia, he asked me to leave the prayer card with him. I don't know if he pursued MAiD, but I am convinced that providential visit gave them hope in a challenging situation.

Nurses take the use of empathy in the nurse-patient relationship for granted but in fact, endeavouring to understand the situation of another person bears witness to their dignity. A husband and wife were both given life-limiting diagnoses within weeks of each other. When I met them, I acknowledged the shock and upheaval this must have caused and the disruption to their routine as well as their future plans. Our conversation wasn't long but gave both patients permission to express their thoughts and fears. When we empathize with our patients, we focus on their dignity and convey to them that we see them as a person and not as a diagnosis.

In the unfortunate circumstance that a patient asks for a MAiD referral, ask them why they want to pursue euthanasia or physician assisted suicide. This allows the conversation to appropriately address the reasons for their request. We can address their concerns including pain management, lack of help and fear by referring them to the appropriate medical and community support and not for MAiD.

Nursing is hard work; in a secular world, bearing witness to the dignity of our patients is even more so. We need to take care of ourselves first, physically, emotionally and spiritually.

We are blessed beyond measure as Catholics. Our Lord has given us Holy Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, frequent confession and spiritual direction to help us. These are what strengthen and console us.

It is imperative that we develop a daily prayer life. We daily juggle shiftwork with personal commitments and responsibilities and sometimes prayer disappears in the chaos. However, numerous saints along with many holy men and women have been attributed with the

instruction that the busier we are, the more we need to spend time in prayer. Our daily commute, whether by public transit or by car, is an opportune time to pray the rosary. Our Blessed Mother has exhorted us to pray the Holy Rosary daily in reparation for the outrages, sacrileges and offenses committed against the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary. Develop a devotion to the Precious Blood of Jesus. In our work, we see a great deal of suffering. Having a devotion to the Precious Blood allows us to understand the salvific purpose of suffering. The [*Seven Offerings of the Precious Blood can be found online, here.*](#) Another appropriate prayer is by St. John Henry Cdl. Newman:

*Jesus, shine through me, and be so in me
that every soul I come in contact with
may feel your presence in my soul*

Central to our lives is our commitment to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and to prayer. *Lex orandi, lex credendi, lex vivendi.* In other words, the law of praying is the law of believing is the law of living (as we pray so we believe and so we live).

If you are told by your workplace to participate in something that is contrary to the Faith, respectfully explain why you cannot comply. Do not give in; regret will follow. Many years ago, I spoke with a registered nurse who had been assisting with therapeutic abortions for the past 25 years and was experiencing moral distress over her situation. In the end, she reluctantly chose to live with moral distress because of job security and a good paycheck. She knowingly chose money over God.

Ultimately, we have to be prepared and willing to sacrifice our career if we are faced with having to choose our beliefs over nursing. This requires us to have courage and trust that the Lord has greater plans for us than we have for ourselves. Pray for an increase in faith because this supernatural virtue increases courage and trust.

One final thought: I recently cared for a priest who was palliative. At the end of our final conversation before his recent death, he said to me “thank you for your vocation.” His gratitude reminded me of how we ought to approach our nursing practice. We are daily entrusted by the Lord with the lives of our patients and He expects us to care for and defend their life and dignity because these are precious gifts from Him. It’s a great responsibility and it is a great vocation.

Suggested Reading:

Michelle O’Rourke and Eugene Dufour, *Embracing the End of Life: Help for Those Who Accompany the Dying.* Novalis Publishing Inc., Toronto, ON, 2012.

Janet E Smith and Christopher Kaczor, *Life Issues, Medical Choices: Questions and Answers for Catholics.* Franciscan Media, Cincinnati, OH, 2016.

Calendar of Events 2020

<p>Tuesday, January 14, 2020 5:30 pm NACN-Canada General members' meeting 2nd Tuesday of each month Jan-May, 2020 Join us in the central front pews on the left side for the 5:30 pm Mass at 5:30 at St. Michael's Cathedral Basilica, Toronto, and for supper at a nearby food court or restaurant.</p>
<p>Saturday, June 25, 2020 9:00 am to 12:00 noon Holy Mass at 9 a.m. Presentation 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. "Euthanasia: Where are we now? Where are we going?" Dr. David D'Souza, M.D. Pain management and palliative care specialist St. Timothy Catholic Church, 21 Leith Hill Rd., North York, Ontario</p>
<p>Wednesday, January 29, 2020 BioEthics Student Discussion Group, Newman Centre 89 St. George St. 6:30-8:00 pm https://canadiancatholicphysicians.com/event/best-meeting-newman-centre-january-2020/</p>
<p>Tuesday, February 11, 2020 5:30 pm NACN-Canada General members' meeting. Join us in the central front pews on the left side for the 5:30 pm Mass at 5:30 at St. Michael's Cathedral Basilica, Toronto, and for supper at a nearby food court or restaurant.</p>
<p>Wednesday, February 26, 2020 BioEthics Student Discussion Group, Newman Centre 89 St. George St. 6:30-8:00 pm https://canadiancatholicphysicians.com/event/best-meeting-newman-centre-january-2020/</p>
<p>Sunday, March 1 2020 ** see article below re: NACN-Canada elections NACN-Canada Nomination Deadline for election of Board officers June 1, 2020</p>
<p>Tuesday, March 10, 2020 5:30 pm NACN-Canada General members' meeting, Join us in the central front pews on the left side for the 5:30 pm Mass at 5:30 at St. Michael's Cathedral Basilica, Toronto, and for supper at a nearby food court or restaurant.</p>

Calendar of Events 2020 (cont'd)

Saturday, March 14, 2020 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Newman Centre Lenten Retreat with Fr. Timothy Gallagher
89 St. George St., Toronto M5S 2E8

Wednesday, March 25, 2020

BioEthics Student Discussion Group, Newman Centre 89 St. George St. 6:30-8:00 pm
<https://canadiancatholicphysicians.com/event/best-meeting-newman-centre-january-2020/>

Tuesday, April 14, 2020 5:30 pm

NACN-Canada General members' meeting. Join us in the central front pews on the left side for the 5:30 pm Mass at 5:30 at St. Michael's Cathedral Basilica, 65 Bond St., Toronto, and for supper at a nearby food court or restaurant.

Tuesday, May 12, 2020 5:30 pm

NACN-Canada General members' meeting. Join us in the central front pews on the left side for the 5:30 pm Mass at 5:30 at St. Michael's Cathedral Basilica, 65 Bond St., Toronto, and for supper at a nearby food court or restaurant.

March for Life

Thursday, May 14, 2020

Ottawa ON

"Sustaining Ethical Care through Resistance and Conscientious Commitment"

21st International Nursing Ethics Conference and 6th International Care Ethics Conference
June 6-7, 2020, Toronto

Student Early bird (and regular) price: \$390.

U of T Nursing Alumni Early bird price: \$500 (discount ends Apr. 10, 2020)

<https://bloomberg.nursing.utoronto.ca/pd/ethics-conferen>

EUTHANASIA: WHERE ARE WE NOW? WHERE ARE WE GOING?



**Presented by Dr. David D'Souza, MD,
pain management and palliative care specialist**

**St. Timothy Catholic Church
21 Leith Hill Rd., North York**

**Saturday, January 25, 2020
Holy Mass: 9:00 a.m.
Presentation: 10a.m. – 12 noon**