



# The Illuminator

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## From Despair to Hope: The Faith Community Nurse and Suicide Prevention

By Christine Jackson-Fraser, RN, BSN, MBA, CHPN, FCN

Suicide is one of the most pressing yet least spoken-about public health issues in our society and sadly, in many churches. According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (2023), suicide is the 11th leading cause of death in the United States. Despite its prevalence, the conversation often remains cloaked in shame, stigma, or silence. For the faith community nurse, suicide prevention is not just a clinical matter, it is a calling. Our role bridges spiritual care and health advocacy, especially when someone utters the most heartbreaking words: "I want to die."

Not long ago, a young woman recovering from a long battle with COVID-19 uttered these very words to her mother: "I'm going to kill myself." The aftermath of her illness had left her physically depleted and emotionally broken. Steroid treatments and medications had caused rapid weight gain, and she could barely recognize herself. Her confidence eroded. Her purpose seemed blurry. She felt trapped in a body she no longer identified with, and her depression deepened.



Her mother, alarmed and unsure of what to do, reached out to me not just as a nurse, but as a trusted faith community leader. That moment affirmed why suicide awareness and intervention are critical within our churches and communities. What we do in those pivotal moments matters.

One of the most dangerous misconceptions is that suicidal statements are attention-seeking rather than life-threatening. But research has shown that most people who die by suicide gave some warning signs (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA], 2023). We must never assume someone won't follow through especially if they've taken the risk to say something out loud.

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## Happiness in Adversity

**Sharon Hall Murff PhD MSN RN,  
CCRN, Faith Community Nurse**

The month of August is generally celebrated as the month of happiness. It seems logical to dedicate a day or a month to proclaim as the happy month since the weather is often nice, summer vacation is in full swing, so to speak, and it has been a good month to take a cruise. However, even though the climate might cooperate for an enjoyable vacation, there is socioeconomic and geopolitical unrest, poverty, and wickedness is pervasive.

The Bible indicates in Matthew 24, that toward the close of earth's history, wickedness will abound in high places, there will be wars, famines, earthquakes, and unusual or unnatural occurrences. Globally, people are fearful and faced with one unfortunate situation after another, so how can happiness be proclaimed?

The current state of society affords Faith Community Nurses with prime opportunities to promote happiness. Psalms 144:15 (Bible, King James Version [KJV]) indicates "Happy is that people, that is in such a case, yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord". For the Christian and the Faith Community Nurse (FCN), happiness should be the theme of life since God has provided multiple opportunities to reflect His character and to mirror His loving kindness.

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## When Faith Transfers into Action

**by Rosalyn Saunders, RN, BSN, MSN, FNP-C, DNP, FCN**

As we move further into the year, we reflect on the many wonderful things that have happened. Numerous individuals and families have explored and enjoyed exuberant vacation trips. Some have known success, others sorrow, but all share the basic human drive to live. July has long been identified as a month symbolizing freedom, deliverance, and spiritual power. In a world of chaos, it's important to know that "faith" still works. This story embodies the love, concern, faith and action of one phenomenal RN nurse. Nurse E.M, as she is affectionately called, has captured the attention and respect of many.

For although she has never been officially trained as a faith community nurse, she has been functioning as one for years, with her selfless acts of kindness, caring, compassion, and spiritual advocacy combined with prayer. Nurse E.M has gone above and beyond, spreading the love and joy of Jesus. She not only thinks of others, but she also puts her faith into action by denying herself, caring for and sharing her time, talents and resources with those that are most vulnerable in the community. Nurse E.M embodies what it means to demonstrate "faith in action". This is the behavior of faith community nurses. They provide holistic care, as they tend to body, mind and spirit. Whether through education, advocacy, or hands-on support, they bring hope and healing and comfort to those in need within our churches, and communities. In Luke 10:2 (Bible, King James Version [KJV]) Jesus said the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few, pray the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into His harvest.

Nurse E.M is constantly following Christ method alone as she transfers her faith into action, by organizing, a group of fellow colleagues and volunteers to serve populations of homeless men, women and children. She prepares food, sleeping bags, water, and clothing for distribution to this group all while attending to the physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of their care as well as her own family.

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## Vegetable Curry

**by Gemalli Austin, DrPH, RD**



Comfort in a bowl—fresh vegetables simmered in rich curry and gentle spice. A hearty, wholesome meal that fills you up and lifts you up.

[Click here for the full recipe!](#)

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