

PERSPECTIVES ON NURSING

WHAT THE CALLING REALLY MEANS

Nursing means courage, tranquility and hope, when one has to face a painful situation. In Nursing, says SISTER THOMASINE, SNA Advisor, Bihar State Branch, "I have touched and lived through the poignant, the dramatic, the tragic." She outlines here the true spirit of our calling.

NURSING has been a heart breakingly beautiful adventure. It is a profession, but more, it is a vocation, dedication to the service of suffering mankind, a missionary service to be rendered at any hour of the day and night as the need arises and the Nurse can be of service.

It has never ceased to be a labour of grace and steel, of beauty and benediction, of deepening dedication and fulfilment.

A Medium

I suppose each nurse reacts to nursing somewhat differently, and to catch just exactly what it is that nursing means, even to oneself, is no easy task. For, nursing is so many things, so often a complexity of complexities of interpersonal relationships. The nurse is a buffer between the patient and the disease. The nurse is the interpreter and the follow-through between the patient and the doctor.

Nursing is bed-side nursing, community nursing, or public health nursing, incidental teaching, classroom teaching, ward teaching, supervisory teaching and administrative teaching.

Nursing is so many intangibles: law and order, discipline of the hospital, the satisfaction of giving deep personal care with tact and dignity.

Nursing means persevering in the pursuit of life, liberty, love, and laughter for and with the most

needy children, the world over and adults too.

Nursing means learning, teaching, reaching, living, giving, caring and sharing. It means taking your heart, knowledge and art with you into the countless fields.

Nursing means travelling through America, Europe, Africa and Asia—everywhere binding up the wounds without benefit of a foreign-language dictionary.

Nursing is like a banyan tree, with fine little roots on its branches that lean over and touch the earth, bringing forth more trees and more life over an ever widening area. So does nursing spread its blessings, reaching the neediest and most distressed of human creatures.

Tearful Gratitude

Nursing is the optimistic, buoyant manner for an automobile accident victim, going home after long precarious weeks in the hospital.

It is watching a child die of cancer, as we stand by relatively helpless. It is the silent, kind, sympathetic, and emphatic attitude of a nurse near a dying patient or sorrowful relatives.

Nursing is the tearful gratitude of an old man without relatives, crying because the Nurses have been so good to him. It is the face of an old lady stilled in death.

Nursing is working under an interior professional discipline when physical and mental fatigue are disregarded. It is listening, much listening with understanding to many different individuals—patients, doctors, relatives, other nurses, aides—and listening with professional senses alerted and personal feelings stilled, keenly seeking the meanings and nuances of what has been omitted as well as what has been said. Nursing is offering encouragement, solace, instruction, understanding. And nursing involves a searching within and without for a meaningful and ever deepening comprehension of life itself.

Nursing means to be able to answer the questions, why, when, where, how, what and who of one's own action in the care of suffering victim.

It means honesty, sincerity, love, prudence, tactfulness, poise, gentleness, quietness, dignity, intelligence in one's behaviour. Nursing means recognising and accepting the feelings and reactions of patients towards people, situations and events.

Good Communication

It means good communication—which is an exchange of information among all sorts of people. It means giving and taking reports. It means planning, organising, delegating, controlling, evaluating the nursing care.

It means quality nursing: the total nursing care. It means knowledge of a patient as a whole person, his total personality, habits, temperaments, socio-economic condition, situation, present complaints, diagnosis, treatment and nursing needs.

Nursing means loyalty and respect to God, patients, doctors, directors, teachers, supervisors, administrators, head-nurse, staff nurses, student nurses, and all the others who contribute to the health care.

Nursing means keeping professional and personal confidence. It means courage, tranquility and hope, when one has to face a painful situation, events, like a sudden death of a patient, an error in medication, dissatisfaction of doctors, patients, supervisors and directors, hearing sad news that a dear one is sick and admitted in the hospital, and one cannot get leave to go and see her, shortage of nurses and the heavy work load and the doctor's demands.

In nursing, I have gotten outside myself and seen the problems and solutions of others. I have touched and lived through the poignant, the dramatic, the tragic. Sometimes I have been of help, able to ease another's burden of pain or sorrows. I have given of myself to patients, but they have given so much more of themselves to me. I have come to see—see with eyes of experience, responsive with understanding—that all persons encounter the same sort of

pains and joys, sorrows and fears and hopes.

These inner reactions are the common denominator of humanity. I have had lessons in undaunted courage. I have seen hope and faith made tangible in suffering. I have seen remarkable recoveries made by fearless patients, assisted by skilled doctors and nurses.

The Lighted Lamp

Florence Nightingale's lighted lamp—the traditional symbol of nursing—gives off both light and heat. To be a nurse is to carry the lamp: the nurse's knowledge, skill and attitude illuminates, so that she may warm the cold darkness of pain and sorrow. In return, the lamp of dedication in the nurse's heart is kept aglow with warmth and love.

Lastly, I must say that I am very grateful, that God has chosen me to be a nurse, for such a noble profession. I love my profession, and I will not give up this for a million dollars even. It brings great joy and fulfilment and satisfaction when I ease the pain and loneliness of the suffering brothers and sisters whom God has created in his image and likeness.

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Nursing as a Career

The goal of nursing is to cushion the tragedies of life caused by illness, disease, neglect and death. The choice is yours, says Mrs. A. BAHL, Sister Tutor, Goa Medical College, Panaji.

NURSING is as old as creation: certainly, one of the oldest arts. It began when the earliest member of the family, helped another in time of sickness. The *Vedas* and other ancient Indian records contain rules concerning hygiene, medicine and nursing which indicates a high level of development. In those days, nursing was performed by young men and elderly women. Later on, it was identified as a religious vocation and as a women's preserve. As a vocation, it involved self-sacrifice and a fair amount of strenuous labour. Still later, society disapproved women of status, going in for the caring of the sick, considering it as a menial job.

Erroneous Outlook

Result : Nursing was taken up by uneducated women, lowering this noble profession to its lowest in the middle ages. However, during the mid-nineteenth century, this erroneous outlook changed. With the growth of medical knowledge and of the hospital as a social institution, the deficiency of nursing needs became apparent. The medical fraternity acutely felt the need of trained nurses. Thus, nursing emerged as a profession, which now commands respect and love.

Today, it is the most noble and demanding of careers. But it's no path of roses for those who enter this profession. It calls for long hours of hard work and strict discipline, far beyond that which a normal office job demands.

Every year, thousands of our countrymen are nursed back to health by loving hands. They perform an essential, nay, inevitable, service to their motherland in all its varied forms of health care. These dedicated souls render domiciliary care, domiciliary midwifery, maternal and

child nursing, family welfare planning, school health programme, nutrition programme, paediatric nursing research and a host of other things.

In fact, from the cradle to the grave there is invariably the need of these "White Caps" to soften man's burden of illness, disease and pain.

And, Yet, what is nursing? The function of a nurse consists of caring for an individual who is a unique complex organism—physically, mentally and socially—during the time of stress, by using professional skills to develop a therapeutic relationship with him, based on mental trust, by assisting him, in his return to and maintenance of adequate health, or to a comfortable death.

Today, the nurse functions as an important organ of any health team. The present trend is to give comprehensive health care. Nursing is an essential component of the health care delivery team. In this scientific age, with the rapid advancement of medical sciences, nursing has become all the more complex. Specialised areas such as cardiac care units, kidney dialysis units, neuro-surgical units, intensive care units need highly skilled nurses in the team. Our country needs more nurses to meet the demands of today. Nurses have always given their all, asking for nothing in return. Their reward is seeing the once broken man back on his legs again.

Would you not like to be one of these privileged saviours? Here is an aptitude for youth with an aptitude for devotional and dedicated service.

Types of Training

1. Auxiliary Nurse-Midwives' Course : Educational requirements: 8th standard passed. Age: Between 18 to 30 years; Duration of training: 2 years.

Students are provided stipends with free accommodation, medical aid, water, electricity, etc. This is a shorter and simpler course in Nursing and Midwifery. They are trained to function as multipurpose workers in the rural areas. Their duties include care of the sick, home visits,