



Dear All,

A new year has begun!

Let me express my best wishes to each and every one of you for a blessed 2012!

Over the last months the financial and economic news has not been very uplifting in Europe. Many countries in the European Community have been struck by the financial crisis which makes daily life harder for many. Budget cuts are also felt and will be felt even more in hospitals and other care facilities. I am sure that more people are struggling to pay their health care bills and their health insurances. Often, a shortage of financial resources and health are destructive partners. The one usually leads to the deterioration of the other. Chaplains are and will be confronted with people who suffer from the financial crisis. I consider sensitivity to people who struggle in society to survive, and therefore often struggle in our health systems, as an important part of chaplaincy. I encountered a few chaplains last year who made a conscious decision to focus on poverty in their hospital, scaling down their involvement in the crowded-with-caregivers units of oncology and palliative care. They asked themselves: where are we needed most? And they developed a program to be able to work with poverty in their hospital. And although I think that chaplains have a specific input in oncology and palliative care, even if there are many other caregivers, I do like the reflection that they made: where are we needed? Well, it made me think. Who needs us, perhaps even more than others because of a specific vulnerability or because they don't have a 'sexy' disease or are not interesting enough scientifically speaking or are considered patients who brought their state upon themselves or are poor? And that is the interesting thing about chaplaincy: there are always new challenges because at our core we are connected with our context and culture.

This year will be an exciting one for the network as our next consultation will take place in Mennorode, The Netherlands. Mennorode is a place in the beautiful Dutch countryside, close to Amsterdam. The

Dutch team, led by Simon Evers, will come up with all the necessary information soon. Just mark the dates in your calendars: June 6 to 10, 2012. I am grateful for all their work and the time the committee has given to welcome you soon. We look forward to see you again!

As an immediate result of the committee meeting in Utrecht in June 2011, you all received the network's first news flash a few months ago. We intend to send a news flash every few months. Thank you for all your positive feedback! That is really encouraging. Hopefully we can keep in touch that way in between consultations. If you have some news from your own associations that you think is interesting for all of us and thus can be in a news flash, please let me know!

As we celebrated Hanukah, Ashura, Christmas, the New Year and Epiphany in the past weeks, we hopefully found and received time to reflect, to enjoy friendship and love, to deepen our spirituality and relation with God. I do wish that we find and receive opportunities to keep on doing that the whole year!

All my best wishes for you and your loved ones

Anne

Coordinator of ENHCC