



# Aging, Spirituality and Palliative Care

*Rev Elizabeth Mackinley*

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Gain greater depth of understanding of end-of-life spiritual issues for older adults

The period of time when a person approaches death is always difficult both for the patient and the caregiver. Aging, Spirituality, and Palliative Care discusses best practices in aged and palliative care while addressing patients' diverse spiritual needs. Leading authorities' presentations from the Third International Conference on Ageing and Spirituality in Adelaide, Australia, in 2004 explore practical, sensitive spiritual approaches to help older patients deal with aging, illness, and approaching death.

Aging, Spirituality, and Palliative Care carefully examines what can be the most spiritually meaningful time in the life of an aging person—confronting illness and death. Though they may be unafraid of dying, older people many times fear the pain and suffering that may accompany it. The process of dying is presented with care and reverence, while providing effective approaches to increase comfort, spirituality, and quality of life. Each chapter is extensively referenced, and many include tables and figures that enhance understanding of research data.

Topics in Aging, Spirituality, and Palliative Care include:

- helping older people to 'sustain the self' to allow them freedom to do personal spiritual work
- helping patients cope with changing circumstances
- providing a sense of direction
- the opposition of spiritual values by contemporary social policy
- caring for each person as an 'ensouled body' and 'embodied soul'
- assessing spiritual needs
- a positive approach to dementia
- spiritual reminiscence as exploration of life meanings
- study comparison of traditional religiousness versus de-institutionalized spiritual seeking
- the pain associated with dying—and spirituality's place in it
- addressing the multiple aspects of suffering
- clowning as care of the spirit
- Buddhist and Christian approaches to understanding aging, death, and spirituality
- caregivers adapting to the world of the patient
- the spiritual aspect of palliative care in residential aged care
- personal competence and operational competence in student learning
- intimate, professional, and communal fidelity

Aging, Spirituality, and Palliative Care is meaningful, valuable reading for chaplains, pastoral workers, palliative care providers, social care providers, nurses, diversional therapists, and other workers who care for the aged.

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