

Editorial

The first issue of Caritas et Veritas in 2020 focuses on the topic of a palliative approach in the care of patients living with a serious illness. This topic has been gradually developing in the Czech Republic since the mid-1990s. At first, this has happened thanks to the hospice movement, and later in connection with the broadly conceived palliative approach. This includes coping with an incurable disease, dying, and grieving, and, in addition to managing the physical symptoms associated with the disease, it also cares for the mental and existential difficulties of the client and his loved ones, as well as for the practical and organisational aspects of assistance. Palliative care is provided by a multidisciplinary team. There is a doctor, nurse, social worker, psychologist or psychotherapist, and clergy who work closely together. The goal of the palliative approach is to find optimal ways to enable the best possible quality of life in a given situation. This should be done in cooperation with the patient and his family. An important part of the topic is also the environment in which the palliative approach is implemented. There must be a legislative, economic, and organisational framework that allows such an approach.

Especially in recent years, these topics have begun to resonate strongly among experts and laymen accompanying their own neighbours and loved ones in a serious illness. Despite significant progress in this field, the system and way of working in palliative care raises a number of questions. Caritas et Veritas therefore invited authors who have been working on this topic to process their experiences and submit their contributions concerning this diverse, current, multidisciplinary area of care which includes social work and spiritual support as well. Contributions could have the nature of theoretical reflections based on facts, reviews, analytically conceived, and discussed experience (for example, in the form of case studies and research studies), or a comparison of foreign experience. Despite the difficult situation caused by the COVID-19 epidemic, three co-author pairs and one author responded with interesting contributions.

The first two authors, Helena and Tomáš Machula, focus on the importance of spirituality in the care of terminally ill patients. The authors focus their text on the fact that one of the important dimensions of helping professions is the question of the meaning of life. This must be taken into account especially in the care of the terminally ill. In this context, they reflect upon the current use of the term spirituality in the professional discourse of helping professions, point out the difficulties that appear in the definitions of spirituality, and propose their own typology of spirituality and its gradation. They subject their proposal to an empirical confrontation with data and experience with various types of clients entering the Hospice of St Jan Nepomuk Neuman in Prachatice. The second pair of authors, Matěj Lejsal and Jiří Krejčí, went to Ireland to process their topic. Ireland, just like the Czech Republic, places great emphasis on the practical aspects of the palliative approach. Both authors are among the experienced leaders with their own extensive experience in the domestic development of palliative care. In their article, they present an insider's comparative analysis of the Czech and Irish palliative care systems in order to – as they write – ‘learn lessons’. This undoubtedly happened. At the end of the article, the reader will learn what brings a positive

effect on the quality of life of the client/patient from the perspective of this international experience of the authors in practice.

The third contribution to the topic is presented by Monika Vachová. In contrast to the previous texts, she focuses on an individual person who cares for the sick and survivors. In the article entitled *Helper Syndrome as a Source of Motivation for Helping Professions in Hospice Care*, the author, in an experienced way, analyses and, with the use of case studies, illustrates the negative effects of having a problematic motivation to help. This type of motivation is associated with the helper syndrome previously described in literature. In her case studies, she addresses the impending effects of this syndrome on both clients and their families, as well as on the multidisciplinary team. At the same time, she shows that supervision has very little corrective influence in these cases as these ‘helpless’ helpers, as the author calls them, tend to avoid it completely.

The last pair of authors, Naděžda Adámková and Michal Růžička, contributes to the question of what is an ‘ideal’ – a unit of measurement for assessing the quality of multidisciplinary care for the terminally ill. In the form of a case study, it presents practical experience with the organisational change of the multidisciplinary home hospice care team associated with the introduction of Australian standards for patient admission to home hospice care. The authors explain why they chose the Australian standards, and they describe what happened at each stage of their implementation. In the end, they present recommendations for other organisations as they can be useful in the process of workflow optimisation in home hospice care teams.

Due to space for other topics, three more professional studies in the field of theology were included in the issue. The first is a methodological study by Jan Kaňák and Barbora Racková. It focuses on the theological and social science framework of the analysis of research data. Specifically, it is the interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) which is modified for the purposes of moral theology. In the second study, Július Pavelčík presents his own interpretation of the Commandment ‘Love your Neighbour as Yourself’ in the Epistle of James. The third *Varia* article by Zuzana Svobodová deals with the topic of hope and its anchoring in interpersonal relationships.

I wish everyone enjoyable reading and a ‘drawing of knowledge’ in this autumn time.

Zuzana Havrdová,
co-editor, member of the editorial board of *Caritas et Veritas*