

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

The Staircase in our Spiritual Home

BY NATHAN

I was reading the book *Cracking the Walnut* by Zen master Thich Nhat Hahn, in which he shares the story of getting a letter from a German Christian priest. In this letter the priest spoke about his Christian journey and how he eventually was drawn to Buddhism. Citing how much Buddhism enhanced his spirituality, he asked whether he should reject Christianity and become a Buddhist.

However, Thich Nhat Hahn's response was that he should not become a Buddhist. Instead, he told the priest to think of Christianity as the first floor of his spiritual home. This home has nurtured him and sheltered him for many years. Perhaps, Nhat Hahn pondered, Buddhism has become a staircase that will allow him to get to the second floor of his home and spirituality.

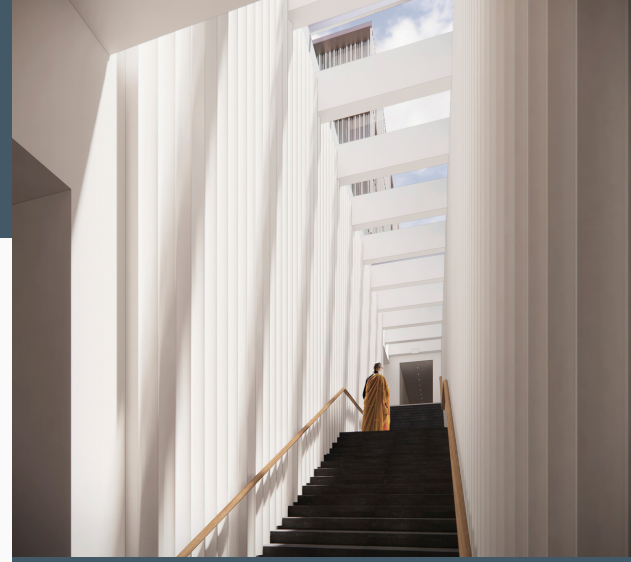
I've been thinking about this analogy all week and wonder if it might be a helpful model for the interreligious work our office is doing.

We often talk about helping our students engage in a spiritual path that brings them life, wholeness, and fullness. However, we do this together. Thus, one can become a fuller Christian by learning from a Muslim while a Muslim student can become a fuller Muslim by learning from a Buddhist.

We actually need our religious neighbor to help us understand the fullness of our own religious tradition. The more we learn about our religious neighbors and their religions, the more we learn about the fullness of God. We need the active engagement of religious difference. Therefore, instead of religious diversity or religious pluralism as a problem, it can be seen as a gift and promise. Such religious diversity allows us to see the multiplicity of the Divine life, as theologian John Thatamanil argues.

This is why we had our Interfaith Panel Discussion yesterday evening. Bringing together a Rabbi, two Christian pastors, and a Unitarian Universalist minister, we learned about their personal spiritual journeys, what convinced them to become spiritual leaders and guides, and how we can better engage with others from different religious traditions.

Hopefully, all of this will allow us to see there is a staircase that can lead us to spiritual rooms we have yet to explore.



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**DONATE \$20 TO
★ RECEIVE A "BE KIND"
T-SHIRT**

PICK UP AT THE SLC

**DONATE AT
PAYMENT.LYNCHBURG.EDU/LYNCHBURGCARES**

**SUPPORT
LYNCHBURG CARES
& GET SOME SWAG!**

**BE KIND.
LOVE OTHERS.**

DONATE HERE

Upcoming Interfaith Holidays

October 31
Samhain (Wicca/Paganism)

November 1
All Saint's Day (Christian)

Dates to Remember

Weekly on Sundays in Snidow Chapel:

- 11 a.m. Worship with Church of the Covenant
- 4:30 p.m. Roman Catholic Mass

LAVENDER WEEK continues
(Details in box on Left)

Wednesday, November 1
8 p.m. in Snidow Chapel
SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE

Anyone who has experienced a loss is invited. Contact the SLC to have a candle lit even if you cannot attend. Email SpiritualLife@lynchburg.edu or call 434.544.8348.

Tuesday, November 7
6 p.m. - Hall Campus Center,
Memorial Ballroom
SOUND BATH WITH GREG BURNS

Watch our social media regarding the
COFFEE CHAT WITH THE CHAPLAINS
Held on Tuesdays from 4:30 - 5:30 p.m. at
the Spiritual Life Center (500 Brevard St.)

LAVENDER WEEK 2023

OCTOBER
23

LGBT+ TRIVIA
WITH PRIZES! 5:30 PM OEI OFFICE



OCTOBER
24

KARAOKE
5:30 PM WESTOVER GRILL



OCTOBER
25

**COURAGEOUS CONVERSATION WITH
JAMIE PANDIT**
3:00 PM GOOGLE MEET



OCTOBER
26

PRIDE WALK & VIGIL
6:00 PM HOPWOOD STEPS



OCTOBER
27

ROCKY HORROR
WITH PRIZES! 7:00 PM SYDNOR



GENDER AND SEXUALITY ALLIANCE

For more information about the Spiritual Life Center, including info on our student groups, go to our webpage - link in the email signature. You can also visit our [Linkt.ree](https://linkt.ree) (Link is in email).