

## SECTION 1

### ACPE: THE STANDARD FOR SPIRITUAL CARE AND EDUCATION

#### *Editor's Introduction*

In the realm of clinical pastoral education (CPE), our longstanding mission has been dedicated to the education and growth of spiritual care leaders. These leaders are expected to have a profound grasp of their unique pastoral identity and competence, alongside a commitment to engaging in reflective and meaningful pastoral practices. This mission has consistently served as a cornerstone of CPE, shaping our endeavors to cultivate effective spiritual caregivers.

However, as we navigate an ever-evolving landscape, we are confronted with new challenges and opportunities that urge us to reassess our educational strategies. This introspection prompts us to ask critical questions: Where are pastoral identity, pastoral competence, and pastoral reflection truly fostered? What does it mean to define “the clinic” within the framework of CPE?

It is essential that we expand our conception of the clinical environment. Instead of limiting our educational experiences to conventional medical settings, we should explore a diverse range of innovative spaces that can serve as valuable learning environments. These could include homeless shelters, safe havens for survivors of domestic violence, busy airports, or even the intimate atmosphere of college dormitories. Each of these unique contexts presents distinct opportunities for pastoral care and reflection, enhancing the educational journey for spiritual care leaders. By embracing these varied “bricks” of learning and adapting our CPE framework, we can create a more inclusive and dynamic approach to spiritual care education. This transformative shift not only respects our foundational mission but also equips us to address the complex needs of the communities we serve in a rapidly changing world. The authors of this section are actively engaged in developing new “bricks” within the CPE paradigm. We invite you to feel inspired to join us in this endeavor. What innovative “bricks” in CPE resonate with your calling? How can you contribute to building a richer, more diverse landscape of spiritual care education? Your insights and initiatives can play a vital role in shaping the future of CPE, fostering a community of compassionate and competent pastoral leaders ready to meet the challenges of our time.

Danielle J. Buhuro  
Editor