



Spirituality of Later Life: On Humor and Despair

Rev Elizabeth Mackinley

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“Humor expresses a certain heroic defiance in the face of life’s most challenging experience and provides a valuable resource for the celebration of life and the divine comedy of faith, hope, and love.”—From the book chapter by Melvin A. Kimble, PhD

Studies have shown that as many people age, their spirituality deepens. *Spirituality of Later Life: On Humor and Despair* explores the challenges faced by those in later life and the use of humor for self-transcendence to achieve greater strength and deeper spirituality. Respected authorities share their insights on humor and despair in the process of spiritual development in later life, with discussions on how to provide effective pastoral practice in aged care.

Spirituality of Later Life: On Humor and Despair presents the major issues that challenge people in later life that could lead them to either spiritual integrity or despair. Beyond the physical and psychosocial, this book shows how the journey into aging can—through humor—become self-transcendent and deeply spiritual in the face of physical decline. This theological perspective illustrates the full breadth of issues facing those in later life. It presents effective pastoral frameworks of care for those who struggle with the depression, dementia, disabilities, losses, and terminal illness that may accompany aging.

Spirituality of Later Life: On Humor and Despair explores:

- humor as a path to self-transcendence in later life
- later life’s ‘paradox of well-being’ and ‘defiant power of the human spirit’
- dementia and its effect on spirituality
- spiritual and pastoral care approaches for those with depression
- religiousness in older people with dementia
- the spiritual journey of hospice patients
- non-speech based pastoral care

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