

# Patient Safety and the Ministry

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**S**ince November 1999, when the Institute of Medicine released *To Err Is Human: Building a Safer Health Care System*, the phrase “medical error” has become frighteningly familiar to us Americans. The idea that ill or injured patients might, in merely seeking medical treatment, put themselves at even greater risk, is a nightmare. How is a justifiably wary public to be reassured?

Patient safety is the subject of this issue’s special section. Our guest editor is Sr. Patricia Talone, RSM, PhD, CHA’s vice president, mission services. In “Patient Safety and the Ministry” (p. 18), Sr. Patricia outlines Catholic health care’s general response to the medical-error problem and introduces the writers we’ve asked to discuss various aspects of it. Here, we’ll note only that, because of the issue’s importance, we’ve moved Fr. Michael D. Place’s column away from its usual position and into the special-section package. In “Quality and the ‘Efficacious Work of God’” (p. 21), Fr. Place, CHA’s president and chief executive officer, discusses the issue’s theological dimension.

## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY

In “A Moment of Grace” (p. 6), Judy Cassidy, a former *Health Progress* editor, describes a daylong conversation last winter that involved the leaders of St. Joseph Health System (SJHS), Orange, CA. SJHS has applied to the Vatican to be recognized as a public juridic person. In their conversation, the system’s leaders discuss their efforts to prepare lay leaders for the duties that lie ahead for them. In “Words, Actions, Beliefs: The Mission at Work” (p. 10), Richard J. Statuto looks back on his career as SJHS’s chief executive. “A Moment of Grace” is the first of a series of articles on sponsorship issues planned for the journal in the coming year.

Meanwhile, in “Integrating Spirituality and Work” (p. 12), Scott McConnaha, a CHA communications specialist, writes about a survey the association conducted on the topic. Sr. Maureen McGuire, DC, senior vice president, mission integration, Ascension Health, St. Louis, in “Toward Workplace Spirituality” (p. 14), describes Ascension’s approach.