

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
CATHOLIC CHAPLAINS

June 12, 2008

John Smith, Th.D., Ph.D.
Director
School of Higher Education
Springfield, USA

Dear Director Smith,

I hope your academic year ended for you with an abundance of professional satisfaction and accomplishment. Your work in preparing future leaders for our world and Church is vital to all of us.

I am writing you on behalf of the ministry of Catholic chaplaincy. We need your help to make this ministry known as a viable ministry option. The students in your institution who are considering a ministry in the Church might be the future chaplains serving in hospitals, hospices, behavioral health facilities, and many other settings.

The National Association of Catholic Chaplains (NACC) has advanced chaplaincy for more than forty years. Twenty years ago 28 percent were priests, over 50 percent religious women, and 16 percent lay people. Today, 16 percent are priests, 36 percent religious women, and more than 42 percent lay people. Given that the average age of chaplains is 63, in the next five years, unlike some other ministries, there *will be an urgent and growing demand* for trained and certified chaplains.

While there are several requirements to be become a board certified chaplain, I want to alert you to the following three:

- Be a Roman Catholic in good standing
- Successfully complete at least four units of clinical pastoral education in a CPE program accredited by the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE) or the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops/Commission on Certification and Accreditation (USCCB/CCA)
- Possess a Master's degree in theology, divinity, religious studies, pastoral ministry, pastoral studies, or spirituality accredited by a member of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation

Based on recent data, we know many students in ministry formation programs are still exploring what ministry they are called to follow. In August, we plan to send you information that will help you:

- Understand better the chaplain ministry, and how your academic and formation programs align with the NACC chaplain standards and competencies for certification
- Offer your students materials and resources that will help them discern the call to chaplaincy
- Provide contact information for chaplains in your area who could present on chaplaincy to groups.

In turn, we want to provide our NACC members with information about your academic programs. We have members who are still in the process of completing their academic and CPE requirements. Any information about your program is most appreciated. You can send us materials or provide us with your institution's preferred web-link.

If you want to contact us earlier because you are already aware of a student who has questions about chaplaincy or you seek materials for your summer programs, please let us know by contacting Cindy Bridges at cbridges@nacc.org.

May God continue to bless your leadership and all you do to prepare the future leaders of our Church.

Sincerely,

David A. Lichter, D.Min.
NACC Executive Director