The ’80s: Growing Professionalism

The first half of the 1980s has been well summarized in the reflection below by Rev. Timothy Toohey, who served as the Executive Director from 1980 until 1984. For practical rather than philosophical reasons, the NACC became an independent organization from the USCC (now the USCCB) on September 1, 1980, and on October 24th moved its headquarters from Washington, DC, to Milwaukee, WI, to seven rooms in the east wing of the historic Henni Hall in St. Francis Seminary.

Father Toohey took up living quarters in Henni Hall and worked long hours on a shoestring budget. He wore many hats and did the heavy lifting as the office began functioning. No job required to run the office was too menial for him; he even regularly bundled the copies of the Camillian and took them to the post office for mailing to the membership. His careful stewardship of the financial resources made it possible for the NACC to quickly become financially self-sufficient.

Reflection

By Rev. Timothy J. Toohey
Executive Director, 1980-1984

What a marvelous ride for me. God has blessed me with knowing the early founders of the NACC, of meeting them as they spoke of the need to gather for the good of ministering to the sick and injured and for mutual support and strength. I was ringside as they and others decided to have conventions on their own, not tied to the various other disciplines in health care.

Not being recognized as ministers hurt religious women and lay persons, and the NACC struggled with and addressed the issue. I saw first hand how hard it was for some to gain acceptance and others to offer that acceptance. The first workshop, the first celebration of the Eucharist, the first acceptance of women into the NACC, the first realization that women should be members, not just associates, gave way quickly to the first woman being on the Board of Directors. Then the remarkable event of a woman being President, without the need to even draw attention to the fact, was a joy to behold and a pleasure to witness.

Then to step out on our own, supporting ourselves and succeeding in quickly growing to be the largest organization of health care ministers, was deeply satisfying. The ability to stand shoulder to shoulder (although with quite a bit of jostling at first) with the cognate associations gave me the pride of being with so many committed and dedicated people who could put themselves in service to not only our sick brothers and sisters but our co-ministers as well.

The absolute struggles of how to train, who should certify, how to develop standards and processes, were hard fought but mostly extremely charitable. The issue of governance was front and center, debated loudly for extended periods, changing through many compromises, after spirited debate.

I could speak of Dave Baeten, Hal Murray, Pat Doerr, Benedict Groesheil, Joe Law, Dick Tessmer, Cyrilla Zarek, Frank Garvey, Rose Carmel and others who gave so much, but I would be minimizing the ten or twelve more who should be mentioned with each one. I am glad God is the one who rewards them.

In 1965, as a deacon in training, I met a remarkable group of men. They were hospital chaplains meeting in St. Louis. They were going to form a Catholic chaplains group and try to do for the Catholic Church what Protestants were doing — to provide something called clinical pastoral education.

Two years later, at the Catholic Hospital Association meeting in Cincinnati, I met a larger group of priests at the National Association of Catholic Chaplains subsection. There must have been 50 or 60 of them. I paid my $5 in dues, even if I was not yet assigned to hospital ministry. In the following year I went to a two-week workshop to prepare for certification in Washington, DC. There were nuns there too, and they were going to be more than “Sister Visitors.” In short order I volunteered and was accepted on the education committee that designed the programs for the convention and the workshops that would lead into clinical pastoral education.

Eventually the NACC and the USCC Board of Examiners, who did the certifying, were led to recognize that religious women and men also had much to offer, and we eventually certified pastoral associates. I had the privilege of being the supervisor to the first non-religious individual to be so certified.

Backed by the St. Louis group, I was elected in 1979 to the office of President-elect, which would be followed by being President and then Past President. That year the United States Catholic Conference and the NACC agreed that the NACC should separate from the USCC offices and stand on our own. The USCC would still appoint the Certification Committee.

At the convention in Utah, I was sworn in as President and then re-signed five minutes later to become the Executive Director of the NACC as it moved from the USCC and Washington to its new home in Milwaukee, where the archbishop gave us reduced rent for several years in Henni Hall at St. Francis Seminary. My only work as president was to appoint two new members to the education committee. Our biggest goof as the Board was that with all the euphoria and fear of going it alone, we forgot to make a budget. Talk about red faces!

All we took to Milwaukee was the 1,800 folders of members and the list of subscribers to the newsletter. In the almost four years I served there, the Board of Directors performed nothing short of miracles. An office was established with all the files, telephones, typewriters and office equipment necessary. Competent office staff and an auditor had to be hired. Bookkeeping and responsible banking had to be learned. Budgeting was our responsibility. A printer for the newsletter had to be found. [Learning how to negotiate with the Postal Service for publica-
A new and consistent logo was designed. The first two computers were purchased and used for filing, typesetting, mailing, and all that we now take for granted. We were the first pastoral care organization to do so. In four years we purchased three new computers, the last being the first real "system." Each cost less than the one before, and the capacity of each was over ten times the previous. The last one purchased during my time probably is outperformed by a GameBoy today.

The formation of regions took place, not without a lot of pain. We decided to use the USCC regions, even though often inconvenient, and an advisory board made up of the heads of each region came into being. Certification training and standards by the NACC came into being, with only certification being from the USCC Board of Examiners. A new constitution had to be constructed. Standards were upgraded both for better training of ministry and to be more in line with the other pastoral care organizations. Our Board took some real leadership in bringing other pastoral care organizations into a body to explore how we could work together and build on each other. Thus the Council on Ministries in Specialized Settings came into being.

The Board of Directors had several retreats for leaders and for general membership. The conventions got their own committee. Supervisors had their own meetings. After much negotiation, the USCC agreed to only one certification: Chaplains. We had grown from 1,200 members in 1979 (about 80% clergy) to over 3,000 (almost 60% religious and 5% lay). We had gone from about 30% certified to almost 60%.

As I look back at 1979 to 1984, I remember so many great people. I won't name them, because the 24 board members, the 38 regional directors, the nine USCC Board of Examiners, the two national episcopal advisors (and many regional episcopal advisors), the three office staff and the 50-plus members of COMISS, the 70-plus committee members and the supervisors I had the joy of knowing still make me sound like I am name-dropping. Each gave so much of their time, their knowledge, their faith, and their hope, that all the computer glitches, the newsletter typos, the myriad of little details disappear into the knowledge that we all did it for the same reason, the only reason for the NACC to exist: "When did we meet you, Lord?" "I was sick and you ministered to me."

_Rev. Timothy J. Toohey is Pastor of St. Ann Parish—Clover Bottom in Washington, MO, and also Chaplain at St. John's Mercy Hospital, Washington._

**REFLECTION**

By Rev. Raymond K. Smith
President, 1981-1982

My time as president of NACC was still a part of the early years of formation and organization of the Chaplains' Association. Our goal was to become an organization that truly served the membership in their areas of ministry. Regions were formed, enabling and encouraging the membership to take a more active part in the affairs of NACC. Those years, although extremely challenging, were rewarding and fulfilling.

_Rev. Raymond K. Smith ministers at Silver Penny Farm Retreat Center in Petaluma, CA._

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**REFLECTION**

By Rev. Thomas L. Albers, CPPS
President, 1982-1983

I would like to make a few comments about our years in office in Milwaukee (1981-83). They were happy years. I had served in chaplaincy for 17 years, mostly in the Chicago area. Since then I have moved on into CPPS administration — eight years on the provincial council, eight years as Provincial Director.

During the time of our leadership the first standards and procedures were written and published for certification in the NACC. I remember spending an entire weekend in Chicago typing the first copy for review by the Board — on a portable typewriter with two carbon copies. What a mess!

We were advocates to widen the use of the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick, allowing pastoral associates to administer. This never got anywhere. Our membership went from being clergy-dominated to including lay participation. I remember some difficult moments regarding the opening of our membership to women.

A highlight for me was the Nashville convention of 1983, which I coordinated. At the banquet all those present at the dais were given cowboy hats and kerchiefs.
Good friends with me were Fr. Dick Tessmer, Sr. Monica Lucas, and Fr. Tim Toohey, Executive Director. Many others come to mind, too many to mention.

It was a good time; I cherish many happy memories of my time in chaplaincy.

Rev. Thomas L. Albers, CPPS, has been in Sedalia, MO, for the past 10 years serving as pastor of two parishes and two missions covering Pettis County.

**REFLECTION**

**By Sr. Patricia Doerr, OP**

President, 1983-1984

I served on the Board of Directors from 1980 to 1985. These were years of phenomenal growth and development. By September 1984 there were more than 3,200 members.

So many changes evolved during this five-year period. Probably the most important thing was the development of the regions. The thirteen regions contributed much to the association. They surfaced new leadership for the NACC and offered educational opportunities through regional conventions and workshops. Regional directors were a consultative body to the Board of Directors, thereby providing grass-roots input. Each region had an Episcopal Advisor in addition to the national Episcopal Advisor. This relationship was mutually beneficial to the NACC and to the Church. Certification and Accreditation Committees were developed at the regional level.

Other extremely important developments during these years were:

- Development of standards and procedures for certification and accreditation, and for renewal, as well as standards and procedures for awarding CEUs.
- Dialogue and collaboration with other pastoral care associations and denominations. It led to plans for an eventual joint conference on pastoral care and the establishment of a nationally recognized Pastoral Care Week.
- First-time NACC representation at the International Congress on Pastoral Care and Counselling.
- Extensive dialogue and consultation with the membership, episcopal advisors, USCC and CCA regarding NACC’s relationship to the USCC and its Commission on Certification and Accreditation.

The NACC took numerous initiatives on behalf of the membership to the whole Church during these years. As a result of its emphasis on education, training, certification, and accreditation, as well as its strong relationship to its episcopal advisors, the NACC emerged as a highly respected and professional organization in the Church and provided qualified, dedicated ministers for the Church’s ministry of healing. In my opinion, the NACC welcomed, affirmed, and fostered the role of religious women, laymen and laywomen in a ministry that was previously performed mostly by male clergy.

I experienced many moments of grace while working with Bishop Stanley Ott of Baton Rouge, LA, who served as our national Episcopal Advisor during my years as President and Past President. Bishop Ott was a kind, gracious person who showed great interest, enthusiasm, and support of NACC by attending meetings and conventions. I remember him inviting Father Bernie Nugent, Father Kevin Tripp and myself to a special consultation meeting at his home in Baton Rouge. He was always a gentle listener and wise counselor. Bishop Ott is deceased, but I am sure he is still interceding for all of us.

An especially joyous event for me was our 1985 20th birthday convention, held in Boston at the new Copley Place Marriott Hotel. It was a wonderful convention, attended by over 500 members. While I served as convention manager, Dave Beaudry, Larry Seidl and Bob Rochon with his local committee did most of the work. During the convention the fire alarm system malfunctioned, and our conventioneers, including Bishop Ott, were forced to evacuate the hotel and were lined up along the street in various states of night attire.

In the early 1980s we had board meetings at the old seminary in Milwaukee. We also stayed there overnight. Each morning as we began our meetings, Father Ira Lott, one of our board members, would regale us with stories of his haunted bedroom and the ghosts he claimed to have seen.

One of the most significant people during my tenure was Father Tim Toohey, Executive Director, whose tireless, inspiring leadership was the driving force behind so many of our accomplishments.

Sr. Patricia Doerr, OP, lives and works at Rosary Convent at Dominican University in River Forest, IL.
I have to say after 18-plus years, most of this is a distant memory. There were several items that stick out as I review my tenure:

1. The reorganization of the management of the association: the regions, the board, and the management of the office.

2. I changed the role of the Executive Director to be very active: traveling the country, attending regional meetings and other outside activities in the name of the association: Catholic Health Association, review of hospital programs, the bishops’ conference, etc. NACC became very visible during my term. Maybe too visible for some.

3. The ecumenical work of the NACC became a major priority with me. I attended all related meetings and conventions, as well as hosting a number of related dialogues and negotiations. I not only spoke to every board member and many regional chairs monthly, if not more, but also every Executive Director of our peer associations monthly, if not weekly.

The files may tell more of a story. But these stand out the most for me personally.

Thank you for allowing me to participate in this special moment for the association.

Edward J. Dietrich is now an independent financial planner in private practice in Palm Springs, CA.

As I think back 20 years and recall the activities of the NACC at that time, I recall the growing self-awareness of the organization. The membership was about 3,300 people, we had initiated relationships with the group known as Joint Issues in Pastoral Care Organizations (JIPCO) and its parent organization, COMISS, and we put great effort into establishing our structure as an organization and our policies regarding accreditation and the recertification of chaplains and supervisors.

Through the years that I served on the national board, I shall never forget the great work and dedication of Sr. Helen Hayes, OSF. The conventions in Boston (1985), St. Louis (1986) and San Diego (1987) were life-filled and growth-filled experiences for me individually and for the NACC itself.

And now, Happy 40th Birthday to the NACC!

Rev. Daniel J. Gatti, SJ, an alumnus of Xavier High School in New York, NY, now serves as its President.

Sr. Helen Hayes, OSF, led the NACC through times of rapid change and transition, but she did not step into the job unprepared. When she became Executive Director in 1987, she had already led the certification and accreditation effort at the national office for four years. She was hired in 1983 as Coordinator of Education, Certification and Accreditation...
and in 1985 became Associate Director. She served as Executive Director until her death in 1992.

Under Sister Helen's leadership, important steps were taken to upgrade standards for certification and the accreditation of CPE training programs, and to begin the process of chaplain recertification. After years of dialogue and negotiation, in 1985 the USCC delegated authority to the NACC to grant certification in the name of the USCC.

Longtime NACC members will remember Sister Helen's leadership tenure as a time of upheaval in the delivery of health care. In 1983, Medicare began reimbursing hospitals on the basis of diagnostic related groups (DRGs) instead of fee-for-service. The result was shortened hospital stays, cutbacks in staff and services, and a shift to outpatient care. The later years, well into the 1990s, became a time of downsizing, closings, job losses, mergers and new systems. Catholic hospitals, like other private and public hospitals, were retrenching and regrouping to become more efficient.

Pastoral care could no longer be taken for granted. Those cost-conscious times meant that pastoral caregivers needed to demonstrate the value of their services and to advocate for pastoral care as part of patient care. Sister Helen regularly attended CHA's annual institute for pastoral care directors to talk about CHA's guidelines for evaluating departments of pastoral care. The NACC had also helped prepare guidelines for pastoral services developed by the Council on Ministry in Specialized Settings (COMISS).

JCAHO (then JCAH) did not include pastoral care in their hospital surveys for accreditation, and the need for an outside group that would do so became apparent. The Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Pastoral Services (JCAPS), an arm of COMISS, was designed to fill this need. Sister Helen was instrumental in its formation, and COMISS accepted her invitation to manage the administrative details of JCAPS at the NACC office.

The need for advocacy made it all the more urgent to seek common ground with other pastoral care organizations, and through collaboration, provide a unified voice for chaplaincy. As Executive Directors, both Ed Dietrich and Sister Helen continued the dialogue with other pastoral care groups that Fr. Toohy had supported.


In 1991, Sr. Helen Hayes, OSF, was given the annual Cardinal Stritch Award at the meeting of the USCC Diocesan Coordinators of Health Affairs in San Francisco. She was honored for making "an outstanding contribution and commitment to the Catholic health care ministry."

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**Kathy Eldridge remembers**

One of Sister Helen's greatest gifts was her ability to empower people at all levels, recalls Kathy Eldridge, the current Acting Director of the NACC. "I think that is why she was so successful as Executive Director, why she was effective as a leader working with committees, the Certification Commission, pastoral care directors, and the membership. She believed that other people were capable and saw their potential to move beyond their current situation. She was intentional about raising people up to be the best they could be."

Sister Helen came to Milwaukee from Rochester, MN, to care for her dying sister and afterwards became guardian to her teenage niece. "Relatively few people knew that she filled a dual role, as both a professional in healthcare ministry and also as a homemaker and substitute mother. At the same time she was fulfilling her responsibilities to her religious community by serving on its Sponsorship Board, she needed to do what a lot of lay people do every day," Eldridge commented.

"Father Toohy's accomplishments — facilitating the relocation, setting up the physical office, and hiring staff — laid the foundation for what we have now. Even though Ed Dietrich was here for a short time, he concentrated on external communication and relationships with regional directors and cognate groups. Sister Helen established and worked to raise the bar on standards and continuing education.

'I see her as a really good teacher. Even on her deathbed, she told me, 'Kathy, you need to learn everything you can about JCAPS.' She didn't seek the spotlight, although she was very gracious when it was her turn to be recognized; instead, she encouraged other people to come forward."

**During Sister Helen's tenure in executive leadership, she empowered and mentored Kathy Eldridge to become office manager several years after she had been hired as a secretary. Kathy Eldridge now serves as Acting Director of the NACC.**

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**Ann O'Shea remembers**

My perception of Helen was that she could find a talent that was good for the NACC. She always brought the talent into the organization that would help the organization grow.

I also see her as a visionary person for the organization. As I was first coming on the commission as a CPE supervisor, more than 20 years ago, she told us, "Remember now, you have to think outside the box; you have to expand out of the hospital setting to do models for CPE in parishes, and take it to new places, because the action-reflection model of education is good for all kinds of organizations as well as for helping people to grow." She envisioned that chaplains could be of service to...
different organizations, in new ministries in parishes, business places, airports. She was pushing that vision a long, long time ago, when I first became involved in the organization.

The model of the chaplain was also expanding at that time. It was no longer true that a chaplain was to serve on a one-to-one basis, but chaplains had to take a leadership role in their workplace, e.g. involved in committee work, and promote the spirituality of employees as well as patients. Sister Helen told us, ‘If you can do that in this organization, you can do it in any kind of organization.’ I think that is why I was able to move out of CPE and get into mission.

Ann O’Shea, an early member of the NACC Certification Commission after the office moved to Milwaukee, is now Vice President of Mission and Ministry at St. Mary Medical Center, Langhorne, PA.

Shirley Nugent, SCN, remembers

Sister Helen was the first woman and the first religious appointed to be the Executive Director. She was a born leader, a conservative innovator, a person who insisted there was room and need for every member of the organization, and every member needed to be involved.

She had extensive board experience; she had served on the board of St. Mary’s Hospital and the Mayo Clinic, where she had chances to learn and innovate. Her professionalism carried over to her focus on the organization, where she had an urgent desire that standards for supervisors and chaplains be articulated, and that CPE programs have standards in place. At that time, the organization ran on a shoestring budget. But she managed, by hook or by crook.

Helen was not afraid of conflict. She worked well in a situation that was conflict; it just helped her locate and move the energy in that group.

I said that she was a conservative innovator; that was evident in her sensitivity to the fact that the organization was in a huge transition. When she first came, the NACC had many more priests. But they were slowly but surely being removed, because their dioceses wanted or needed them elsewhere. She had to deal with their grief and loss at being removed from that area. But she also had to welcome in the lay men and women, the women religious, and deacons. She made that shift with great sensitivity and great perseverance. It didn’t tear the organization apart. But innovation took place, slowly but surely.

Sr. Shirley Nugent, SCN, is a CPE Supervisor at Caritas Medical Center in Brighton, MA, and was on the first Board of Directors under the NACC’s new structure in 2000.

Sister Helen reflects

Sister Helen frequently wrote a column in the NACC newsletter under the simple title “Reflections.” In 1991 as she looked back over the work of the previous year, she wrote:

As I continue to speak for you and to represent you in a variety of arenas, I am struck by the expansion of our ministry and the complexity of the issues we face. To mention a few:

- The continuing rise in cost of health care presents an urgent need for chaplains to identify and articulate how their services are essential to the healing process.
- Increasingly short hospital stays force chaplains to look at the locus of their ministry — and sharpen their skills in responding to change. The call for a closer link with parishes is imperative.
- The growing hunger for spirituality in our times, the development of wellness programs and the inclusion of spirituality as a component of the healing process challenge the chaplain in diverse ways.
- Education challenges include both meeting needs for initial preparation for ministry as well as constant retooling of our present chaplains to function in multi-cultural, multi-language and complex social situations. Ethical decisions are rapidly moving from the doctor/patient (and chaplain) relationship to the courts and the voting arena. Where is our influence?

These key challenges facing the membership in the early 1990s are still among the challenges facing ministers in health care today.

1991: Sr. Helen Hayes, OSE, is congratulated by Msgr. Harold Murray at the meeting of the USCC Diocesan Coordinators of Health Affairs in San Francisco, where she received the group’s annual Cardinal Stritch Award.
By Deacon Earl Chartier  
NACC President, 1986-1987

It's hard to believe that it's been over 15 years since my active involvement in NACC governance activities. I retired from full-time ministry in December of 1996, but have kept very busy in parish and hospital work in the meantime. I did take three years off from ministry during my wife's bout with cancer. She died on March 29, 2004. I miss her terribly and so have gotten re-involved in ministry for my own well-being as well as those I serve.

I remember fondly having Lois with me at some of the meetings and conferences when I served on the board in the late '80s. Pat Hanser, Rich Augustyn, Sister Helen, and office staff used to tease her by calling her "the first lady" while I served as President. She loved you folks as much as I did.

There were many fun times with the board, especially when Pat Hanser entertained us with his hilarious sense of humor, but we went through some very difficult times, too. The NACC was in a time of transition as we were challenged to update guidelines for personnel and financial affairs in the organization. I believe the NACC stepped up a notch in being more accountable to the membership during that period of time.

Finally, one of the things I am most proud of is being a part of the search and interview committee that chose Joe Driscoll as our Executive Director. I believe Joe Driscoll was one of the best things that happened to the NACC since its birth in the 1960s. There were many other pioneers who got it off the ground and running, but I believe Joe led us in becoming the professional, well-respected organization it is today.

Deacon Earl Chartier keeps busy in retirement with diaconal duties at his parish, St. Mary of the Angels, and with pastoral care duties at Bellin Hospital, Green Bay, WI, where he conducts a weekly prayer service for psychiatric patients.

By Sr. Rosemary Abramovich, OP  
President, 1987-1989

Journey back with me to the years 1986-1989. The St. Louis Convention called me to leadership as the President-elect of the NACC. During that year we welcomed Sr. Helen Hayes, OSF, as the Executive Director. Two seemingly separate groups governed the association at that time: the Board of Directors and the Regional Directors. Each had its own agenda and style of working together. As the year progressed, it seemed that the Spirit might be urging us in a new direction. After much reflection, study and dialogue, the Leadership Council was formed in 1987.

The Board and Regional Directors together worked for the common good of the organization. A move from Robert's Rules to Consensus building was introduced. The leadership was invited to participate in regional assemblies. Not only did we learn, and work hard, we played hard too. (It was in Philadelphia that I learned the "chicken dance," and in South Dakota I celebrated Cinco de Mayo with members of the region and the Episcopal Advisor!)

Helen Hayes and I represented the NACC at the International Congress on Pastoral Care and Counselling in Melbourne, Australia in July 1987. Meeting with men and women from many parts of the world was a mind-expanding experience for me. This gathering strengthened our resolve to continue involvement with others in the pastoral care field. We were so proud of our history and journey. We also had the chance to learn about the lived reality of people who offered pastoral ministry in many parts of the world.

When we returned to San Diego for the 1987 convention, the call was given to us to "Chart a New Course." Not only were we setting sail with new models of leadership in our own organization, we were joining other cognate groups in preparation for the first Dialogue '88. Special memories flood my soul as I recall the event held in chilly Minneapolis in November 1988. The convention center had been demolished; 1,800 of us were housed in many hotels, and the plenary sessions were held in a large church. The symphony was magnificent. New friendships were forged, and COMISS became incorporated. Those were the days!
1980s Issues and Organizational Notes

1980
Issues: Getting settled in new location in Milwaukee; new constitution, independent structure; legal status of pastoral care, especially in regard to insurance and other payments.
Organizational Notes: Sept. 1: NACC independent, with Rev. Timothy Toohey as first Executive Director; offices moved to Milwaukee; constitution completely revised.

1981
Issues: Relation with USCC; certification and accreditation procedures.
Organizational Notes: Revision of 1980 constitution and bylaws; NACC debt-free; national Committee on Regionalization formed; first formal regional meetings held, and contact persons appointed in each region; two popular retreats held at NACC headquarters; Sr. Anita Lapeyre, RSCJ, succeeds Rev. Paul Henry as Executive Secretary of Division of Chaplain Services, USCC; NACC incorporated in Wisconsin.

1982
Issues: Desire for NACC’s own processes of certification and accreditation; nuclear and military concerns.
Organizational Notes: Revision of 1980 constitution and bylaws; first meeting of regional representatives with BOD; regions hold own conventions and elect officers; Transitional Committee (NACC and BOE) formed to change certification procedures and policies; Most Rev. Thomas J. Murphy, DD, STD, Bishop of Great Falls, MT, becomes Episcopal Advisor; committee formed to work on standards and procedures for certification and accreditation under new plan; NACC Certification and Accreditation Committees formed.

1983
Issues: Certification and accreditation; implementing and evaluating new organization.
Organizational Notes: Third revision of 1980 NACC constitution and bylaws; Council of Regional Representatives formed, two members to serve on BOD; new USCC/CCA begins its work; NACC standards provisionally accepted; BOD representatives hold first annual meeting with episcopal advisors; subcommittee formed to adopt JIPCO (Joint Issues in Pastoral Care Organizations) standards for evaluation and accreditation of departments of pastoral care; Sr. Helen Hayes, OSF, hired as Coordinator of Education, Certification and Accreditation; Most Rev. Stanley J. Ott, STD, Bishop of Baton Rouge, LA, named Episcopal Advisor; resolution passed to establish a Pastoral Care Week in conjunction with other groups in JIPCO.

Enthusiasm was high as we journeyed back home. Hopefully our spirits were charged and we were proud of our contributions to the Dialogue.

Each year in November, we were invited to the bishops’ annual meeting in Washington, D.C. Discussions were held with the NACC Episcopal Advisors over breakfast. We raised issues concerning the importance of professional CPE training for chaplains, the role of laity as professional chaplains, and Anointing of the Sick, just to name a few. The dialogue was educational, informative and honest. I experienced mutual respect and support at those meetings.

1989 brought further collaboration within the association and pastoral care ministry. It flourished in health care settings, parishes, prisons, and in the business community. Our membership grew in wisdom and numbers. The laity, women and men religious, and priests worked together in committees, task forces, and commissions to keep the spirit alive. As with any dynamic group, creative tension and differences of opinion and expertise existed. But members worked diligently to find common ground.

A few weeks before the convention of 1989, when my term as President was complete, I received a call to chair the Coordinating Committee for Dialogue ’94. This would turn out to be a five-year process of collaboration, creative imagining, and risk-taking with new models of dialogue and lots of humor. The Dialogue event would be held in Milwaukee under one roof! Since the National Office was located in Milwaukee (since 1980), we felt like the hosts of the grand celebration. Every cognate group in COMISS contributed financial resources and personnel for committee work to this effort. Lee Wiensch, of Executive Director, Inc., and her team of conference planners worked hand in hand with us to make this event successful. One highlight was the awarding of the COMISS medal to Henri Nouwen for his life work in pastoral ministry. His response was one of the holiest moments of the week.

Over the course of those three years, I received support and encouragement from the Adrian Dominican sisters, my family, the St. Charles Hospital Community in Oregon, OH, the men and women who served with me on the Board and Leadership Council, the National Office Staff, the members of COMISS, and the NACC members.

The years of service to the NACC offered me opportunities to learn and use a variety of leadership skills, to form new and lasting relationships, to stretch my thinking and practice the art of leadership. I will be forever grateful for the encouragement and challenge to “Chart a New Course.” I loved every minute of those three years and then some!

Sr. Rosemary Abramovich, OP, is Administrator of the Dominican Life Center, in Adrian, MI.
1984
Issues: Continuing CCA/NACC/USCC dialogue on certification and accreditation issues; dialogue with JIPCO and COMISS; recertification.
Organizational Notes: Fourth revision in NACC constitution and bylaws; Rev. Edward J. Dietrich succeeds Rev. Timothy Toohey as Executive Director; establishment and training of regional certification and accreditation committees. Members certified before 1980 (who did not expect to have to recertify) and afterward must henceforth recertify; recertification schedule established; CEU guidelines and reporting sheets developed; Distinguished Service Award created; implementation of new election process; NACC accepts COMISS Guidelines for Evaluating Pastoral Services.

1985
Issues: Continued dialogue with CCA; need to research organizational/governance structure of NACC; fiscal affairs — proposal on dues and membership categories; recertification timetable; exploration of establishing Federation of Pastoral Care and Counseling Organizations and Joint Commission for Accreditation of Pastoral Services and Pastoral Education; proposed membership in the corporation of the Journal of Pastoral Care Publications, Inc.
Organizational Notes: USCC delegates authority to the NACC for two years to grant certification in the name of USCC; Sr. Helen Hayes, OSF, becomes Associate Director for Membership, Certification, and Accreditation and later Associate Director; Financial Advisory Committee meets for first time; NACC names official delegate to Program and Planning Committee of Dialogue '88 (JIPCO/COMISS joint venture); participation on Joint Task Force on Accreditation; membership dues increase in October; NACC sponsors first Pastoral Care Week; NACC purchases membership in the Journal of Pastoral Care Publications, Inc.

1986
Issues: Exploration of new model of governance for the NACC; consideration of how volunteer leadership can best be accountable to membership; challenges of multifaceted health systems, need to integrate ministry and management; ethical issues and pain management in cancer patients; response to demands of productivity studies for pastoral care visits; development of new accounting and budgeting system; membership drive for new members.
Organizational Notes: Rev. Edward J. Dietrich resigns as Executive Director; Sr. Helen Hayes, OSF, named Acting Executive Director; recertification of chaplains (or pastoral associates) and supervisors begins; task force develops Common Vision and Five-Year Plan for NACC (nature, governance, stewardship, development); Pastoral Care Week concept studied; needs survey about present and future direction of NACC; emeritus membership category added.

1987
Issues: Concern for lack of medical care for the poor; JCAPS constituted for voluntary accreditation of pastoral services; internal and public images of NACC explored through Convention poll; need to communicate expanding concept of pastoral care in health care systems; promotion of professionalism and unity among NACC members.
Organizational Notes: Sr. Helen Hayes, OSF, named Executive Director; budgeting and investing policy reviewed; decision made to hire business manager; new Constitution and Bylaws for COMISS ratified; harmony grows between Board and Council of Regional Directors (CRD), begin holding joint meetings.

1988
Issues: Standards change process developed; members encouraged to document incidents of unavailability of priest for Sacrament of the Sick; Continuing Education Needs survey; national education effort for members; member challenge to renewed integration of spiritual and professional dimensions of ministry.
Organizational Notes: NACC office serves as administrative base for JCAPS; Most. Rev. Leroy T. Matthiesen, DD, Bishop of Amarillo, TX, becomes National Episcopal Advisor; new dues structure adopted; NACC holds Peace Tree planting ceremony in September at new USCC building in Washington, DC.

1989: Sr. Helen Hayes, OSF (standing, right), meets with pastoral care directors and CPE Supervisors at CHAS Annual Institute in San Antonio. From left are Sr. Mary Anna Euring, OP, St. Mary Hospital of Brooklyn, NY; Rev. Richard Tessmer, Alexian Brothers Medical Center, Elk Grove Village, IL; and Msgr. Joseph Dolan, Director and Supervisor, Catholic Charities, Brooklyn, NY.