

A Chaplaincy Ambassador's Update

By Catherine Valeriotte

Just two years into my own chaplaincy career, I am eager to get the word out to other Catholics about chaplaincy. I find that most Catholics are unaware that lay people are able to pursue this rewarding vocation and actually get paid for it. I know there is a decline in the numbers of Catholic chaplains, and I'd like to see others, especially women, consider the field.

I wrote to my pastor and asked if I could be allowed to have a booth at our annual parish ministries fair, or speak at our Adult Faith Enrichment series. My pastor, true to form, was encouraging, and forwarded my letter to the directors of both events. The Adult Faith Enrichment group invited me to speak, and asked me to widen out the topic a little: include some information about chaplain skills that can be used by Eucharistic Ministers to the Homebound, and also some information about my own journey of discerning my vocation that might help others with their discernment.

I spent my Christmas season writing my talk and creating my very first ever PowerPoint presentation to go with it. Our Sunday bulletin included a promotion for the three weeks prior to my talk on Jan 14. The last Sunday this flyer was included: (see below). Needless to say my Christmas cards did not go out on time!

My PowerPoint presentation looked great, but the day of the talk I found the embedded video, "Is God Calling You?" would not play on our parish system. Knowing this in advance helped me to be calm for the talk and fill in some of the missing info. My small audience of about 20 people was very attentive, and asked a number of questions. One woman wanted to pursue chaplaincy, and another (because of the heavy education requirement) wanted instead to pursue pet therapy (which I included in my talk as part of my own journey.) The AFE leader asked if I could come back again and speak to another group! A man who heard about the talk and couldn't attend phoned me and we met for coffee. I was able to help him consider his options for ministry. This was all quite gratifying.

In retrospect, though, I think I might have chosen an idea I saw on the NACC website after I had already scheduled my talk. That chaplain spoke for just a few minutes at all the Sunday Masses, and then handed out brochures after the Mass. That seems as though it would be the best way to reach a lot of people quickly, though I couldn't have gone into so much depth. Since my talk, I've approached a nearby Catholic girls' high school, and asked if I could speak at a career/vocations day. My talk is now ready, so I can tailor it to the needs of any group. I will send out a barrage of letters soon, and see who else will let me speak!

St. Bernardine Adult Faith Enrichment Program

Presents



A CHAPLAIN'S STORY:

*All About a New Profession Serving
"The Least of These."*

with

Chaplain Catherine Valeriote

*Did you know that since Vatican II a new profession, chaplaincy,
has opened up to lay women and men?*

What is this little-known career?

Do chaplains have skills I can use in my own ministry? What are they?

How do I discern what God is calling me to do?

Chaplain Catherine Valeriote of our parish will share the story of her journey to chaplaincy and some of the rewards and requirements of that calling. She'll offer guidance to discern your own calling, and describe chaplain skills we can all use in ministry and life.

Thursday, January 14, 2016

7:30 PM

**St. Bernardine of Siena - Monsignor Murray Hall
24410 Calvert Street
Woodland Hills
(818) 888-8200**

(light refreshments will be served)

Presenter: Catherine Valeriote is a professional chaplain certified by the National Association of Catholic Chaplains and a member of St. Bernardine's parish. She currently works as a chaplain for St. John's Regional Medical Center in Oxnard, and Buena Vista Hospice in Westlake Village. She was formerly a television news reporter and producer, freelance writer, and stay-at-home mother of twin daughters.