A CHAPLAIN’S STORY:
WITH CATHERINE VALERIOTE, BCC
CHAPLAINCY: A NEW VOCATION

Born of Vatican II, open to lay people, paid profession

Little Known, crisis of declining numbers

Calling and Discernment
WHAT WE’LL COVER

- 1) What is chaplaincy? What am I talking about?
- 2) What does a day in the life of a chaplain look like? (video)
- 3) Theological underpinnings of chaplaincy
- 4) Discernment, education and certification
- 5) Transposable chaplain skills (to EM and other ministries)
WHAT IS A CHAPLAIN?

Minister attached to a secular institution, not a parish

For example: hospital, prison, military unit, police or fire dept.

All Catholic Chaplains were priests, until the 1970’s.

Vatican II and the priest shortage

Beginning of the NACC and lay chaplaincy
ALL ABOUT THE STORY

• Patients and Families share their stories

• Receive grace and support in return

• Start with a story
HEARING THE CALL

“Do what you can, where you are, with what you have.”

“Whatever you do for the least of these you do for me...I was sick and you cared for me.”
Matthew 25: 35-40”
PET THERAPY MINISTRY
NACC VIDEO
IS GOD CALLING YOU?
A DAY IN HOSPICE

Working In the field, support for patients and families

Outside and inside: Sunshine vs sobering

Longterm relationships, before and after death.

Example: bereavement tale
HOSPITAL DAY

• Variety of cases. Assess newly admitted patients
• Respond to emergencies like code blues, deaths, rapid responses
• Also to consults requested by doctors, nurses & patients, and family meetings
• See 8 to 15 patients in a day
SURPRISES

• Things that DON’T HAPPEN often

• Proselytizing: Not allowed to overtly evangelize

• Answering theological questions- smoking question, cancer punishment

• Unexpected connections: Atheist & Sikh example
WHAT’S NEW ABOUT THIS?

• Religious orders ministered to the sick and dying for millennia.

• No clerical vows, lay people living and working in the secular world

• Paid by a secular institution, yet endorsed by priests and bishops and certified under the authority of the Church.
THEOLOGICAL UNDERPINNINGS

Vatican II: New Role of the Laity: The People of God

Lumen Gentium:

“It is the noble duty of pastors to recognize the services and charismatic gifts of the laity. Pastors were not meant by Christ to shoulder alone the entire saving mission of the Church toward the world (Lumen Gentium #30)
PRIEST, PROPHET, & KING

• “These faithful are by baptism made one body with Christ and are constituted among the people of God; they are in their own way made sharers in the priestly, prophetical, and kingly functions of Christ: and they carry out for their own part the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and the world.” (Lumen Gentium #31)

• Priest: Prayers at sickbed and deathbed, communion services
• Prophet: Voice for the patient- Code Blue CPR example
• King: Guide in ethical decisions, prompt to address end of life issues
NACC MEMBERSHIP PROFILE

1995 – 3547 Members
- 50% Sisters (1757)
- 25% Lay (887)
- 20% Priests (693)
- 5% Brothers and Deacons (174)
- 70% Certified

2015 – 2247 Members
- 54% Lay (1229)
- 25% Sisters (553)
- 17% Priests (391)
- 4% Brothers and Deacons (95)
- 65.0% Certified
STEPS TO

CHAPLAINCY

Plus: Endorsement by pastor & bishop
CHAPLAIN SKILLS

ACTIVE LISTENING:

Non-anxious, non-judgmental, not there to “fix,” hearing them

Open-ended questions, no agenda, let them lead

Going deeper: paraphrasing, repeating, asking for more, silence

Life Review: Example of patient whose brother died. Prayers improved by listening.

Not about US......and exceptions
DISCERNMENT

NOT A STRAIGHT LINE

EXPERIMENTED:
TAUGHT AT GUADALUPE CENTER
WROTE NOVELS
PARISH LIFE COURSES
DISCERNMENT WORKSHOP:
“CALLED AND GIFTED”
LISTEN TO YOUR LOVED ONES AND YOUR THOUGHTS
# REWARDS AND COSTS OF CHAPLAINCY

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<td>Making a difference</td>
<td>Depression, Burnout</td>
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<td>(Caregiver example)</td>
<td>Broken heart, sad environment</td>
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<td>Positive Feedback</td>
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<td>Relationships</td>
<td>How do you not let sorrow bleed into your own life?</td>
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ADDRESSING THE DOWNSIDES

SELF CARE:  Sister Judy:  “If you want to give life, you must have life.”

Amount of work

Daily joys:  exercise, spiritual practice

REALITY CHECK:

“If you would follow me, you have to take up your cross.”  (Matt 16:24)
ELEMENT OF CHANGE AND PROGRESS

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor freeman, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”
Gal 3:28
GET THE WORD OUT

Number of chaplains is declining

Tell your friends and children

Take a brochure, resource list, NACC.org

Any questions??