



THE AMERICAN LEGION

CHAPLAIN'S  
"HOW TO..."  
**MANUAL**

*"For God and Country we associate  
ourselves together..."*



THE AMERICAN LEGION  
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

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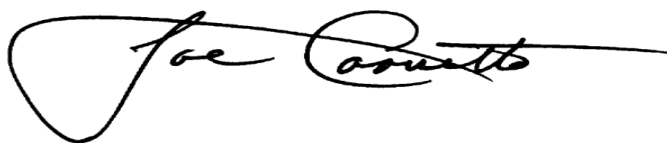
## Acknowledgments

The National Americanism Commission is grateful to those who have contributed to this manual. A “thank you” to Dr. Calvin Turpin (CA), National Chaplain 2000-2001 for his “The American Legion Chaplain: Purpose and Work (A Guide).” Rev James T. Akers (KS), National Chaplain 2004-2005 and Department Chaplain for authoring “The American Legion and Auxiliary Chaplain and the Pastoral Visit,” “Writing and Delivering the Funeral or Memorial Meditation” and “Grief Counseling in a Group Setting: Healing the Hurts.” Rev. Norris A. Keirn (IN), National Chaplain 2002-2003 and Department Chaplain for his insightful look at “They’ve Asked Me to do a Funeral and I Said Yes!” and Mr. Lawrence L. Vollink (MI), National Chaplain 2009-2010 and past Department Chaplain for his narrative on “How to Conduct a Department Chaplain’s Class (A Course Outline).” “Fold With Care” by Rev. George Schwanenberg was previously published in *The American Legion Dispatch*, April 24, 1997.

Dr. Thomas C. Faircloth (NC), Department Chaplain (deceased) authored “Religion and The American Legion.”

These dedicated chaplains have not only helped build the role of chaplain, they helped train those who have been asked to serve as post and department chaplains. Their contributions are deeply appreciated and we commend their efforts.

Finally, a special “thank you” to the Legion and Auxiliary chaplains for their review and suggestions to improve this manual.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joe Caouette". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Joseph E. Caouette, Chairman  
National Americanism Commission

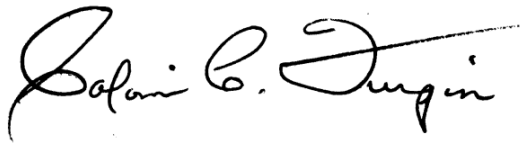
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## **The American Legion Chaplain: Purpose and Work (A Guide)**

### **Foreword**

I am indebted to many, both within and outside The American Legion, who preceded me in this significant ministry. From them and countless other sources I have gained insight into the purpose and work of the chaplain. Reflections of what I have observed and learned will be found in this work. To those contributions I have added personal ideas and information that come from my many years in various types of chaplaincy.

I trust that a study of this small work will make The American Legion chaplaincy more meaningful and effective.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Calvin C. Turpin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'C'.

**Dr. Calvin C. Turpin  
National Chaplain 2000 - 2001  
The American Legion**

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## Introduction

This work has been prepared in response to requests from Legionnaires wishing additional information about the purpose and work of The American Legion chaplain. Many new chaplains, at every level, are at a loss in knowing what is expected of them and where to turn to find the necessary resources to do their tasks. It is desired that this small work might answer several of the most frequent questions and help make it possible for chaplains to fulfill their responsibilities. It is intended to be long enough to be helpful; yet, short enough to be used as a ready reference.

## History and Development

When the word “chaplaincy” is either seen or heard most think of the military. That is true because of the significant and historic role the chaplaincy has long played in the military. That is

***“You must strive to multiply bread so that it suffices for the tables of man-kind.”***

**Pope John Paul II**

still true. However, there are many types of chaplain’s service, including that of The American Legion, available to those willing to serve in such a capacity. Each type of chaplain’s service is distinct depending upon its purpose and those being served.

The chaplaincy has a long and honorable history; it is as old as the story of military operations. The term goes back to a legend of the fourth century about Martin of Tours. It is said that on his

way home from battle he met a shivering beggar. He cut his cloak in two parts and gave one to the beggar. Legend says that night he had a vision of Christ wearing the part given to the one in need. His part known as a “cappa” was kept in a shrine called “cappella,” becoming an object of veneration. French kings applied the term “chappelains,” which meant “keepers of the cloak,” to those clergy who ministered to them.

In the years that followed chaplains were found wherever men went to war. In Colonial America the tradition was continued. The legal origin of the chaplaincy as a part of the American military service dates from 29 July 1775 when the Continental Congress recognized the chaplaincy as being part of the army. From that date the role and mission of the chaplaincy has grown. Now the chaplaincy plays a significant role in all branches of service.

One might well ask, “Is The American Legion chaplaincy important?” Our founding fathers must have thought so because an office of chaplain was established. From that day until now the chaplain has been an integral part of the total program. And no program is complete without the services of a chaplain.

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### **Purposes**

The chaplaincy has many purposes. One of its major purposes is to help persons grow in their relationship with God and one another. Also, we serve as a reminder of the transcendent and seek to develop an environment within which Legionnaires are encouraged in their personal and collective moral and spiritual growth. We are to remind all Americans that God is the source of all rights and privileges.

The American Legion is comprehensive in nature embracing all religions, faiths, and denominations within its ranks. The chaplaincy being non-denominational and non-sectarian, wishes to minister to the spiritual needs of all without regard to either affiliation or non-affiliation.

Chaplains seek to minister to people wherever there is a need. For many, chaplains are the only ministers they will ever know, as they have no affiliation with church, synagogue, or other religious institution. The role of the chaplain is ever increasing due to the aging of our membership. Each Legionnaire should be alert to the physical and spiritual needs of his/her comrades. The chaplain should be notified when there is death, illness, or special concern in the membership. At that point the chaplain should provide all ministry and service available.

### **Qualifications**

How is the chaplain selected? The National Chaplain is appointed. Department, area, district, and post chaplains are either elected or appointed in keeping with specific constitutions and by-laws.

Must the chaplain be ordained? No, most are not. Anyone can serve who is willing. However, any person serving in the office should have demonstrated a sense of spiritual maturity and be committed to the chaplaincy. Otherwise, the chaplain will not provide the spiritual counsel needed by the commander and members alike.

What other characteristics should the chaplain possess? He/she should be a caring person. There should be a desire to help others.

The chaplain should have a positive attitude toward himself/herself, spiritual matters, the unit served, and The American Legion. Knowing that attitudes show, all chaplains should be proud of their positions and determined to do a good job.

The chaplain ought to be willing to serve where there is a need. We can't be selective in our service for we have a responsibility to all. Neither can we serve only when it is convenient because chaplains should provide support as needed. Death, illness, family problems, and other concerns seldom take place at the convenience of the chaplain. Rather, it is the chaplain who is to change his/her schedule to provide time to serve when there is a need. Remember that the chaplain's office door should always be open!

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The ability to keep things confidential is an absolute necessity for any chaplain. Never reveal those things learned or discussed in a private situation while serving as chaplain and spiritual advisor. Integrity can be immediately lost while revealing those things to which one is privy. The chaplain should seek to be neutral when helping settle disputes. A Legionnaire should never be political while serving in the capacity of a chaplain. If he/she is, it ought to be made clear that such an act is being done as a private member not as a chaplain.

It is helpful, but not necessary to be a public speaker. It is perfectly in order for the chaplain to read prayers and other comments relative to the office.

No one should be appointed/elected chaplain against his/her will. Neither should a person accept the position just to hold an office. Furthermore, no one should be either elected or appointed just to fill a spot on the roster. In other words, someone who is able and willing to serve as chaplain in the best sense of the word should fill the office. The chaplain should seek to be a model in matters related to the ethical and moral. When one does not live up to either expectations or set standards of conduct it reflects adversely on the post served; indeed, the entire American Legion.

### **Work**

The greatest number of questions addressed to me relate to the work of a chaplain. People want to know just what a chaplain is supposed to do. Many either have just been installed or are waiting to be installed for the first time. They know there is a chaplain, but what is he/she to do. I answer that the work can be as large and diverse as one is willing to make it. Generally, our task is to serve and minister where there is a need. The chaplain, being on the staff of the commander, is to serve as spiritual advisor for all members of the post.

The following, while serving as an outline, is helpful, but should not be considered definitive. The chaplain should:

Be present at all post events. By simply being there he/she is saying this is a significant occasion and it is recognized that one has a responsibility to be present regardless of whether or not there is a particular role to fill. In other words, a chaplain's presence is essential.

Prayers: every Legionnaire knows that the chaplain gives the invocation and benediction at meetings. I regret that many think that is the total work of the chaplain. Also, the chaplain gives the memorial prayers at Post Everlasting services. What prayers should be given? Should they be limited to the written ones found in our manuals? No, those are always appropriate, but one need not limit himself/herself to those provided in the resource tools. It is always acceptable and fitting to use your own prayers providing they are in good taste. The chaplain should always be aware of the ecumenical nature of our constituency.

The chaplain should participate in the following:

- ✓ Four Chaplains Days and Religious Emphasis Weeks.
- ✓ Independence Day events.
- ✓ Veterans Day Memorials.
- ✓ Installations.
- ✓ Initiations.

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- ✓ Funeral and memorials when requested.
  - ✓ Visit the ill, bereaved, shut-ins, disabled, and prospective members.
  - ✓ Send cards and make telephone calls as needed.
  - ✓ Take part in all rituals and ceremonies of The American Legion.
  - ✓ Communicate with officers, members, and community organizations.
  - ✓ Provide spiritual leadership through the Legion's "Service to God and Country" program.

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## **Chaplain's Calendar\***

The chaplain will find it helpful to be aware of coming events around which he/she can plan his/her work. Prayers and service can be built around special occasions during the year. The chaplain's calendar below should prove most helpful in anticipating service responsibilities.

### **January**

New Year's Day; Vietnam Cease-Fire - January 27, 1973

### **February**

Americanism Month; First Sunday - Four Chaplains Sunday;  
Religious Emphasis Week; Presidents' Day; Valentines Day

### **March**

American Legion Birthday

### **April**

Holy Seasons; Children & Youth Month

### **May**

Mother's Day; Armed Forces Day; Poppy Day; Memorial Day

### **June**

D-Day - June 6, 1944; Flag Day; Father's Day

### **July**

Independence Day; Korean War Ended - July 27, 1953

### **August**

American Legion National Convention

### **September**

V-J Day - September 2, 1945; Labor Day; Citizenship Day;  
Patriot Day

### **October**

Columbus Day

### **November**

Election Day; Veterans Day; Thanksgiving Day; Family Week

### **December**

Pearl Harbor Day - December 7, 1941; Festival of Hanukkah  
& Christmas

\*Source the "Service to God and Country" Chaplain's Handbook.

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## Tools For Chaplains

It is necessary for one to have proper tools if a satisfactory job is to be done. The American Legion has provided the chaplain with some excellent resources to be used in the work of the chaplain. Each is provided for a specific purpose. The chaplain should sit periodically and either study or review the tools available to assist him/her in the chaplain's program. That way each will know where to turn when there is a need. I suggest that all chaplains have copies of the following along with this guide. They will provide a ready reference.

*American Legion Post Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies* - This guide provides a tool for post officers, district and county commanders, and serves as a Manual of Ceremonies. Each chaplain should possess a copy of this guide for it contains many of the prayers that are helpful for special events.

*"Service to God and Country" Chaplain's Handbook* - Here is found the purpose and work of the God and Country program. It tells of our background, our heritage, the need for such an emphasis, and its objectives. A brief statement is found on why one should serve God. The importance of public worship and daily family prayer is discussed. Also, the matter of service to country is considered. "The Legionnaire by his/her service to Country is involved as an individual with the Community and Nation." The chaplain should assist each member in becoming or assist each member on how to become a better citizen.

Additional information is found on FOUR CHAPLAINS' DAY including the saga of these brave heroes. There is a brief list of the duties of the chaplain plus a few prayers to be used as is appropriate. It contains other helpful information for the chaplain. This tool has been revised in recent years and is even more useful than in past years.

*The Chaplain's Prayer Manual* - Before I describe this manual I need to say a few additional words in general about prayers. It has already been briefly stated that a chaplain need not limit his/her prayers to those provided by The American Legion. As previously mentioned the chaplain should be aware of and sensitive to the ecumenical nature of our membership. Representatives of various traditions and those of no tradition are found in each post. This should be remembered in selecting appropriate prayers

*The Chaplain's Prayer Manual* has invocations, benedictions, table graces, and prayers for most American Legion events. There are prayers for our organization's birthday, Presidents' Month, the armed forces, memorial occasions, Post Everlasting ceremonies, Flag Day, Independence Day, V-J Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, New Year, building dedications, and installations.

There are prayers for: The American Legion; our POW/MIAs; U.S. civil authorities; and miscellaneous needs.

There are prayers in poetry and special readings. Also, there is a guideline for a memorial service, information on graveside services, and a Four Chaplains' Day program that are helpful.

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## Community Resources

There will be times the chaplain must go beyond The American Legion to obtain the necessary resources to do the task required. There are many places to look for necessary assistance if one only knows where to turn. Each chaplain should be aware of the resources available in his/her community.

The following can provide much assistance if properly cultivated:

**Funeral Directors:** The chaplain should make himself/herself available to assist with funerals when requested. Ask them to notify you upon the death of a veteran. Most are happy to comply with your wishes. You will find many to be pleased with mutual support: funeral directors know how to apply for flags to drape caskets, veteran's funeral expenses, headstones, etc.

**Hospital Administrators:** They will identify areas where they can assist. It may be advisable to use their services while awaiting the transfer of comrades to a VA Medical Center.

**Counseling Resources:** There will be times when counseling beyond the capabilities of the chaplain will be desired. Your community most likely will have one or more counseling services. The chaplain may want to refer comrades to such facilities.

**Newspaper/Radio/TV personnel:** They can help with publicity related to the chaplains program. They and the public are interested in knowing what The American Legion is doing. Develop a contact person with each communication facility. Let them know when something interesting is to take place.

## Annual Report

In some, if not all departments, each chaplain is to make an annual report to the department. Each chaplain should follow established guidelines. Each report should accurately reflect the year's achievements and make possible meaningful projections for the following year.

It is most helpful if the chaplain keeps a record of all his/her activities as they occur. If this is done little effort is required to complete the annual report. Reports would reflect whether or not the chaplain participated in: Four Chaplains Day; memorial services; Independence Day celebrations; Memorial Day activities; Veterans Day memorials; installations; initiations; Post Everlasting services; funerals; and other services.

Also, you may be required to report: general visits; hospital visits; sick calls at home; and visits to bereaved.

The chaplain should list: letters/cards sent; telephone calls made in the interest of the chaplaincy; miles traveled as a chaplain; hours spent on chaplain's activities; and money spent on travel, cards, postage, telephone, etc.

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### **Conclusion**

The chaplaincy is essential to the work of The American Legion. No program will be complete without it. The position of chaplain is an important one. Each chaplain should take pride in serving God and Country. Be positive in your attitude toward the chaplaincy and the total work of The American Legion. Remember, at all times, you are to keep confidences. Your integrity and that of our organization depend upon it.

A chaplain's presence is needed for all events. Mingle with the people. Make it possible for the members to easily contact you with their concerns and problems. Look sharp and be sharp! Properly wear a clean cap. Wear it with pride because it is our uniform. The cap tells people who you are. As you pass a mirror look to see if all is well.

The chaplaincy is more than reading printed prayers, as important as they may be, at regularly scheduled events. It can be as important and productive as you are willing to make it. We exist to serve others. New opportunities for the chaplain's ministry are opening daily. The aging of our members make it essential that we be alert for all service needs.

One final statement. **Look like a chaplain - act like a chaplain - and be a chaplain!**

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## **The American Legion and Auxiliary Chaplain and The Pastoral Visit**

Rev. James T. Akers

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote: “Once we had wooden chalices and golden priests; now we have golden chalices and wooden priests.” Emerson's perception of the non-caring, formal and distant minister is one that we, in our time, must still strive to overcome. Our effectiveness as chaplains directly depends upon our ability to relate to hurting people, wherever they may be found.

Pastoral care is more than counseling. It is taking care of hurting people and celebrating with others. The chaplain/pastor should be the model caregiver. He or she may not be a gifted orator or have a charismatic personality, but there is no excuse for a chaplain not to care.

Pastoral care is both art and science. It is art because the minister must have a sixth sense about people. Pastoral care also is a science where the caregiver has a systematic discipline in visiting parishioners and intervening during crises. The chaplain who wants to be a real care giver needs to develop a sound plan for regular visitation in the hospitals, care giving facilities, and residence homes in his or her area.

Hospital ministry is an important part of the chaplain's responsibility to veterans and their families. The chaplain's role differs from that of the parish minister. The chaplain does not take the place of a patient's regular minister. The pastor visits a hospital patient to encourage the patient's spiritual life, offer the comfort of faith, and express the concern of the congregation.

While the chaplain may also do these things, depending upon his or her relationship with the patient, the very nature of a chaplain's role brings another dimension to the dynamics of the visit. He or she is an extension of our organization, The American Legion. Since the chaplain of the Legion is by definition nondenominational, another level of pastoral care can be attained.

Legion and Auxiliary chaplains need to understand that one does not need to have formal ministerial training in order to become an effective visitor of patients. A caring personality is the greatest qualification. Spiritual preparation is the basic preparation for the chaplain. Spiritual preparation is necessary for the chaplain because spirituality is the unique gift the chaplain has to offer. Unlike the medical doctor, the chaplain has no pills. The chaplain does not fulfill the divine call by lending money like a banker. The inner heart of ministry is spirituality. Chaplains who do not prepare spiritually have nothing to give that can't be given by a social service agency.

The beginning point of spiritual preparation is the individual's own experience with God. This is the spring that feeds the streams of spirituality and waters the arid fields of one's life and ministry. What grace did Paul have to share before his Damascus road experience? The source of spirituality is the transcendent. Scripture and prayer are doors into the spiritual. Private devotion and meditation are essential to spiritual preparation.

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There are other helpful ways to spiritual preparation. Reading devotional literature, listening to music, and seeking out a spiritual director who can offer insights and asks questions can move one toward spiritual sensitivity. The key to being an effective chaplain is to be an observer and a learner of what works in interpersonal relationships. A good chaplain wants to do the best with what God has given. A good chaplain will never stop preparing for the task and opportunity which comes from Gods call upon ones life.

### **Some Guidelines for Visitation**

Having prepared ones self spiritually and mentally for hospital visitation, here are some basic rules to guide you in this ministry:

Learn the culture of health care facilities. Familiarize yourself with the protocol and regulations of the place you visit. This means more than just finding out the visiting hours. Most hospitals have a system for registering chaplains who desire access to patients. At this time, you will be given information to guide you in your regular visitation. You will also want to meet the in-house chaplain.

Make contact with key hospital personnel. Introduce yourself to staff physicians and nursing directors. These are the people who, along with floor nurses and other staff, with whom you want to be on good terms in order to be accepted within the hospital setting.

Respect patient and family wishes regarding visits. In many hospitals, there is a “Pastors List,” of all patients. This list indicates a room location of each person, along with their religious preference and a notation as to whether or not they welcome visits by a pastor or priest. If in doubt about this, always consult a family member first. You may need your ID to consult this confidential list.

Respect privacy and nursing needs before entering a room. Always check with a floor nurse or clerk before visiting on a floor to ensure that you are not interrupting a procedure. Knock before entering and give time for the patient to respond before going in the room. If there is more than one patient in the room, be sensitive to that persons needs. Brief visits are best! You are not calling on the patient to entertain them or occupy time. Make your visit short and to the point. Express your concern but do not inquire regarding specific conditions. LISTEN more than you talk! Take your cues from the patient as to what they wish to discuss. If family members are in the room, introduce yourself but do not engage in lengthy conversation. Be sensitive in your physical approach to the patient; don't sit on the bed or lean against furniture. Remain standing, unless invited to take a seat. If the patient is asleep or medicated, don't arouse them; leave your card with a note on the back that you called at a certain time.

What about prayer? Many patients will appreciate your offering a brief prayer at the end of your visit. Do not assume that everyone wants prayer; always ask before offering audible prayer. If this is not desired, just say: “I am praying for you,” as you leave the room. Prayer is a delicate issue unless you know the patient very well, so be guided by empathy and divine guidance in this area.

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Multiple visits and follow-up. Some people will welcome daily visits when hospitalized. Others like only one or two visits. After the initial visit always ask if you may call on them again. If practical, make a follow-up visit after the patient is dismissed to their home. In any event, make a phone call after they are home, or send a card. Your continued concern is a mark of your ministry. Always be discrete in discussing patients with others in your church or community.

May your chaplaincy be rewarding and blessed!

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## **Writing and Delivering the Funeral or Memorial Meditation**

Rev. James T. Akers  
*“I am doing a great work  
and I cannot come down.”*  
Nehemiah 6:3 (NIV)

### **Introduction**

The American Legion and Auxiliary chaplain often will come in contact with people of other faiths or no faith when called upon to conduct a memorial or funeral service. What we say at these times must prove worthy of those we honor as well as those who attend our services. Our words must withstand the scrutiny of many. They must uphold ideals of truth, sincerity, and compassion. Developing skill and confidence in writing the meditation, which is the heart of the service, will serve you well in your ministry to veterans and their families.

### **Purposes of Memorials and Funerals**

- ✓ They are for the living persons.
- ✓ They are about deceased persons.
- ✓ They are intended to glorify God.

### **Funeral Principles**

- ✓ People want something about God first in a service and something about man second.
- ✓ We need to clearly understand that the human soul hungers for God at a funeral or memorial as at no other time.
- ✓ The human hunger to hear God’s reassurance amid the mystery of death should be carried out in every message.

### **Preparation for Writing the Meditation**

- ✓ Gathering basic information.
- ✓ Selection of meditation theme and Scripture: The resource file.
- ✓ Observing and recording life’s daily experiences as a resource for mediation ideas.

### **Writing the Meditation**

- ✓ The opening statement; scripture; story.
- ✓ The content; (carrying out the theme) in the meditation.
- ✓ The closing.

### **Delivering the Meditation**

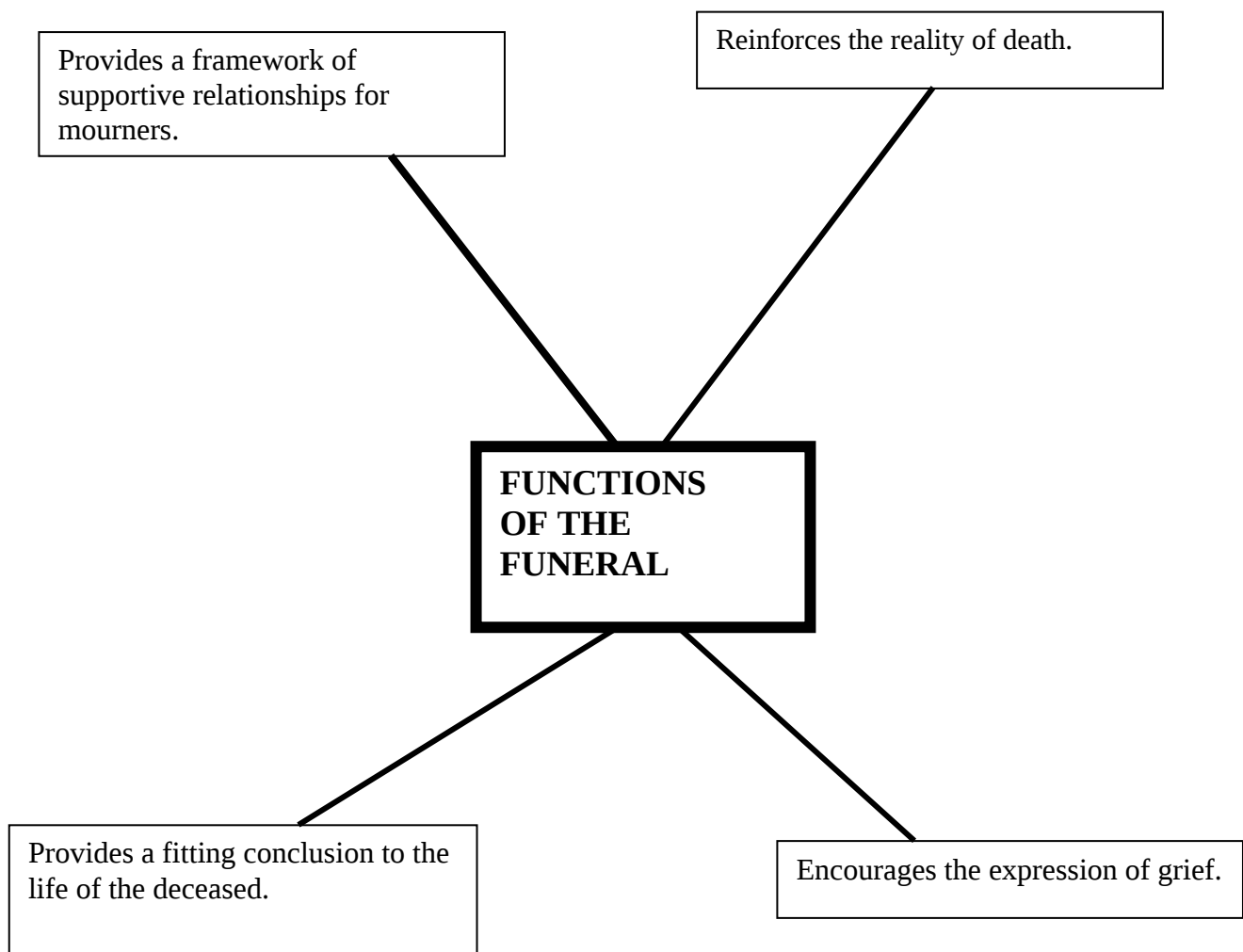
- ✓ Oral, voice.
- ✓ Personal and physical setting.
- ✓ Reading the scriptures.
- ✓ Style, mood, tempo.

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### Conclusion

*“We must give the listener something striking, something a man would get up in the middle of the night to hear; which is worth his walking fifty miles to listen to. Let your thunderbolts drop out of a clear sky!”*

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, 1834-1892  
The Metropolitan Tabernacle, London



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## **They've Asked Me to do a Funeral and I Said Yes!!!**

Rev. Norris A. Keirn

### **Getting It Together**

It is an honor and a privilege to serve.

Why you were asked:

- ✓ You were a close friend.
- ✓ The family likes and respects you.
- ✓ You are seen as a person of diligent faith.
- ✓ They have seen your performance as a chaplain at other functions.
- ✓ You represent the Legion.
- ✓ The deceased did not have a connection to a local House of Faith.
- ✓ The family does not know a local clergy person.

God moves in mysterious ways! You are an emissary of God. Pray for divine guidance.

### **Act Normal**

Begin to shape the service according to your beliefs, unless the family specifically requests otherwise.

- ✓ If you have used a consistent expression of faith then continue with it through this service.
- ✓ If you have been “generic” in the past, then continue on.
- ✓ Learn from others, but don't imitate them, if they wanted someone else they would have asked them!
- ✓ Don't compromise your personal beliefs or ethics. You have a right to say no.

### **Make Contact With the Family**

It is common in this day and age to have your first call to come from the funeral director. It may even come third-handed through the post.

If you knew the deceased you are off and running. However, it is my experience, that I had at best, a casual acquaintance with the deceased or family member.

### **Find Out the Following (usually from funeral director or contact person)**

- ✓ Date, time and place of funeral.
- ✓ Place of burial.
- ✓ Whether you will ride in the hearse, with the procession, or in your own vehicle.
- ✓ Date, time and place of visitation.
- ✓ Key family contact person (spouse, child, etc.)

### **Contact Key Family Person and Ask**

Are there any specific requests for the service? (Many of the arrangements will already have been made with the funeral director.)

- ✓ Are there any special scripture passages that they would like to use?
- ✓ Are there any poems or writings they would like to use?
- ✓ Will they have any family representative giving a eulogy? (If not you will be doing this.)
- ✓ A good source is always the obituary in the newspaper.

- 
- ✓ The funeral director can write up a clergy record for you that list family roots and offspring, church and organization ties, etc.
  - ✓ *Ask specifically, “What would you like me to mention about your \_\_\_\_\_?” This will give you a lot of personal tidbits to weave into the message.*

### **Difficulties**

The family wants a short service.

- ✓ Always ask for a time reference!
- ✓ What is short for you may be too short or too long for the family.

The family tells me they want me to take care of it. Go to the obituary, talk to post members, and give the best generic service that you can!

- ✓ The deceased was a JERK!
  - Don’t lie!
  - It is not your job to preach someone into heaven!
  - If you make a person seem better than what they were you will lose the sincerity of the occasion and do an injustice.
- ✓ Don’t tell everything you know!
  - It is not your job to condemn them to Hell!
  - For a really troubled life, it is appropriate to make reference to it, but either leave the mystery unsolved or with possible hope.
  - Silence at times is golden.
  - Extended illness before death. Mention the struggle, but remember to share the victory. This is where faith can come in!
- ✓ The deceased was a “heathen”.
  - Don’t promise eternal salvation where it is questionable.
  - Don’t promise damnation where it is questionable.
  - Commit them into the righteous loving arms of their Creator.
- ✓ Suicide (see above).

### **Remember the family and friends**

- ✓ The service will not do the deceased any good!
- ✓ Your job is to help the family to pass through this point in their grieving process and to have hope.
- ✓ Point the family in the direction of sustaining faith and pray for God’s presence with them.

### **K.I.S.S.**

- ✓ **Keep**
- ✓ **It**
- ✓ **Simple**
- ✓ **Stupid**

Each person in the audience will fill in their own blanks with the details.

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### **Planning the Service**

Try to be at the visitation. This will give you further contact with the family and the funeral director. Find out about an open or closed casket.

- ✓ Closed is the most appropriate.
- ✓ The family usually goes to the visitation a half-hour before the general public.
  - This is a good time for you to be there to offer comfort and a visible presence of God.
  - Offer to pray with the family when it seem appropriate, this can do so much good.

### **The Service**

Religious bookstores have minister's manuals or funeral manuals that can be a good resource. Also, your personal clergy will have resources available.

- ✓ If you are not a clergy person, you will probably not be in a house of worship.
- ✓ If you are in a house of worship you are subject to their rules and rituals.
- ✓ You must clear what you intend to do with the presiding clergy.
- ✓ If a clergy is participating, you should be subordinate to them, unless the family has designated you as the principal speaker.

### **Opening**

(Words from God, i.e., Scripture)

*Note: All Scripture quoted here is from the New International Version unless noted.*

"The Bible says...", or "The Psalmist declares...", or "Jesus said...". Example: Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die (John 1:25-6). I am the Alpha and Omega (Rev. 1:8). The first and the last (Rev. 1:17). I died, and behold I am alive forever, and I hold the keys of Hell and Death (Rev. 1:17c). Because I live, you also will live (John 14:19b)". Omit reading the book chapter and verse.

### **Greeting**

- ✓ Bringing the audience on board and identifying the reason.
- ✓ Example: Friends we are gathered here today to pay our final respects to the re-mains of \_\_\_\_\_, may we be unified in the Spirit of our Lord as He searches our hearts so that in our pain we can be consoled, in our mourning we may hope and in the presence of death we can be assured of resurrection!

### **Prayer**

(Extemporaneous or Written.)

### **Affirmation of the deceased's faith**

(Optional of course).

### **Reading of Scriptures**

- ✓ Five passages averaging 15 to 20 verses each works very well.
- ✓ The Twenty-Third Psalm always works! (Unless requested to be omitted.) Use KJV for this psalm unless family specifies different.

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✓ For the rest of the scripture use a translation that you feel comfortable in reading. A modern translation works well.

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### **Suggested Scripture:**

#### **Old Testament:**

Psalm 6  
Psalm 103  
Psalm 112  
Psalm 130  
Psalm 145  
Proverbs 31:10-31 (Wife)  
Ecclesiastes 3:1-13  
Isaiah 40:28-31  
Isaiah 43-44 (excerpts)  
Isaiah 55:1-3, 6-13

#### **Gospels:**

Matthew 10:27-33  
Luke 6:36-38  
John 3:14-16  
John 11:25-26  
John 14:1-10a

#### **Epistles:**

Romans 8:28-39  
I Cor. 13  
I Cor. 15:35-44, 51-58  
II Cor. 1:3-7  
Philippians 4:4-9  
I Tim. 1:15-17  
Rev. 21:1-7  
Rev. 21 (excerpts)

### **Message**

(reflections on the Scriptures.)

This can be interwoven with the naming.

### **Naming**

- ✓ Make sure you have the name right, it adds warmth to know the nick name.
- ✓ Remember some people did not go by their first given name.
- ✓ Eulogy or Words of Remembrance of the deceased.

### **Closing Prayer and Benediction**

- ✓ Find out from the funeral director about procedure.
- ✓ If the family is led to the casket for a final look or final remembrance you should stand by the casket in a prayerful manner.
- ✓ Do not interfere with the family's mourning.
- ✓ If they need you they will come to you or make a gesture

You will lead the precession to the hearse. (See procedure from *Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies*.)

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### **The Committal service at the grave site**

If there was no service at the funeral home or other facility, you will want to make the Committal more extended. This could be done by additional Scripture and a mini eulogy.

- ✓ You will lead the procession from the hearse to the grave.
- ✓ You should stand at the head of the grave and preferably at the left by the blue field of the Flag if the casket is draped.
- ✓ Due to the grave's location, the size of the crowd, the tent, weather conditions, etc., you will have to be flexible.

### **The Service**

- ✓ Words from Scripture
- ✓ Prayer
- ✓ Prayer of Committal: (Address of Deity) into your hands we commend your child (name of deceased) in hope for resurrection unto life eternal. This body we commit to the ground (or elements if cremation or the deep if at sea), earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord henceforth. "Blessed indeed," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!" (Rev. 15:13).
- ✓ The Lord's Prayer (Always works with Protestants or Catholics. However, Catholics omit the doxology on the end.) Encourage those assembled to participate.
- ✓ Benediction/Blessing.
- ✓ Turn the service over to the Commander of the firing squad.
- ✓ After the presentation of the Flag and Taps, you may express your personal condolences to the family and offer any further assistance that you believe to be appropriate.

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## **Grief Counseling in a Group Setting: Healing the Hurts**

Rev. James T. Akers

### **Introduction**

Grief, like death and dying, is one of those life experiences we all go through but are not apt to consider in any general way until we're forced to—either because suddenly we ourselves experience it or because we want to know how to support others who are grieving. The purpose of this presentation is to simply give a general description of what is involved in the process of grief, to be sensitive to the needs of those around us who are experiencing grief, and to suggest some ways we, as chaplains, can minister to them in a group setting. Groups experiencing collective loss may be found in the church, social or fraternal organizations or, very commonly in the schools.

### **Definitions**

Grief is a painful reaction to the loss of someone or something that is important to us. Usually, the word “grief” brings to mind the loss of a loved one through death. However, there are other kinds of loss that cause us to grieve; the loss of a marriage partner through separation or divorce; the loss of a body part, such as a limb, or an internal organ, or our teeth or hair. Also there is the loss of our community when we move to a new town; the loss of a career either by retirement or involuntary separation. There is a sense of loss when our children leave home, and other forms of grief we may not even consciously recognize.

We are seeing, regrettably, more and more collective grief, especially among children and youth, as our society undergoes a paradigm shift toward more overt violence in our schools, our workplaces, and our great cities. Witness the unprecedented terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, DC on September 11, 2001. Great disasters affect everyone, hence the need to address, in a compassionate and effective manner, “hurting people,” either individually or in the group settings where a common sense of loss may prevail.

Bereavement refers to the state of being deprived of another's company, usually due to death. The depth and duration of a person's bereavement will depend on the relationship and the nature of the loss.

Mourning involves a cultural response to the event, the way in which the experience of loss is incorporated into daily life in a more practical sense. It includes social etiquette, cultural, heritage, and religious and spiritual influences. Grief, bereavement and mourning are intertwined; all are forms of our reactions to a profound separation in our lives. Everyone will grieve differently; grief is as individual as those who experience it.

### **Some General Observations About Grief**

A. Grief is not a simple state, it is a process. When we suffer from something like poison ivy, we break out in an itchy rash, treat it with Calamine or some such, and gradually the itchy rash subsides, and we are cured. Grief comes, with quite different symptoms in each, and we are not cured until all relevant stages have been completed.

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B. Grief is generally thought of as an “illness,” and in many respects is similar to a physical illness. For example, people tend to treat the bereaved as we would sick people. Employers expect them to miss work, they stay home, and relatives and friends often talk in hushed voices. For a time, others take over responsibility for making decisions and act on their behalf. When grief is severe they may be disabled for weeks, and relatives worry about them.

C. The analogy between grief and physical illness breaks down, however, when we get to the method of curing it. With a physical illness, the treatment involves fighting the sickness in some way usually by setting drugs over and against the disease. With grief, however, the only way to overcome the illness is by giving in to it by consenting to feel the pain, shed the tears, admit the loved one is gone, and set about living the rest of our lives without them. Finally, the only way to overcome grief is to grieve. Time may heal some wounds by itself, but such is not the case with grief.

D. The loss of a significant person is a crisis in our lives and as is generally the case with a crisis, the way we handle it is apt to affect our ability to handle other crises in the future. In this respect, a life crisis is a little like a broken leg. If properly set, there is every reason to believe the bone will heal and possibly be stronger than it was before the break occurred. If not well set, however, the bone will not heal properly, and the person will be less strong than before. Similarly, when we face grief, we take a risk; we may be better off than we were before, or we may come out worse off. Never, however, are we quite the same.

E. The length of time the grief process takes varies a lot, and depends on many factors, for example:

1. The closeness of the relationship between the bereaved and the deceased.
2. The ability of the person to take time to grieve.
3. The willingness of the person to grieve.
4. Whether or not the person has good help in getting through the process. This involves good counseling support, when appropriate.

### **The Purpose of the Grief Process**

The overall purpose of the grief process seems to be threefold:

1. To emancipate oneself from bondage to the deceased person; that is, to accept that the relationship is over; to assess it for what it was and what it wasn't; to recognize that as important as that person and that relationship were, it is, however, a relationship that has no future, and to get on with living.
2. To readjust to the environment in which the deceased is missing—for example, to find new ways of dealing with needs that used to be met by the missing person.
3. To form new relationships with others. This loved person is dead and cannot be replaced; but this doesn't mean that the bereaved cannot or should not experience other loving relationships.

### **The Stages of Grief**

It is my impression that clinical studies on grief are not very advanced. However, from what I've read it seems that there is a commonly agreed picture of what a bereaved person looks like to an

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outsider and what some of the feelings and perceptions are that are going on inside. The following stages of grief appear most commonly in the literature. Two things to note; not everyone goes through every stage, and the stages are not nearly as chronological or distinct from one another as the list implies.

Commonly referred to as the five phases of grief: Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression and Acceptance, the stages are not necessarily reached in that order, and are often revisited several times. A person may achieve acceptance, only to back up and experience one or more of the stages again. Grief is not tidy. Grief is a powerful, defining emotion that never really leaves those it touches. But it should, in time, become manageable.

### **Compassion the “Sixth Stage”**

I believe there is a sixth stage, or better, symptom of grief that I have not seen mentioned in clinical studies, but which I’ve seen in many cases-sometimes in the initial hours after a death occurs, sometimes a little later, and often as a permanent byproduct. That is a much-heightened sensitivity to the suffering, or even mild discomfort, of others. Often, someone waiting for a loved one to die will earnestly inquire about the condition of someone else who is having physical problems who is known by the pastor or other visitor to the hospital, nursing home or hospice setting. It seems that suffering increases our ability to identify with the pain suffered by others, to feel compassion, and to address their pain in some meaningful way.

### **Some Ways to Help Children with the Grief Process**

Children have an awareness about death, even if they don’t talk about it in our presence. Listening to the news, watching television, reading books, talking to friends, hearing adults talk about events-all influence children’s perceptions of grief and loss. They can quickly learn who they can and cannot talk with about death. The way adults respond to questions or concerns will also have an effect of a child’s attitudes and feelings. Increasingly, in the school setting, collective grief is being addressed through a series of interventions intended to support and help children and staff. This includes both the formal actions taken by the school administration and teaching staff as well as individual and small and large group interventions conducted by school and outside counselors. These school interventions, in cooperation with parental support, help the children grieve and learn new coping mechanisms, which can be used in the event of future losses. These group interventions center on what are called “The Tasks of Grieving.”

### **The Tasks of Grieving**

Sandra S. Fox has an intervention process to help groups of children cope with death and provide crisis counseling to schools and community groups when either individual deaths occur or tragic events strike a community. Her book, *Good Grief: Helping Groups of Children When a Friend Dies* (1988) outlines four psychological tasks that children need to accomplish at the time of death:

1. Understanding
2. Grieving
3. Commemorating
4. Going on

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#### A. Understanding:

To facilitate the first task, children need to be given honest and accurate information about the death in words that they can understand. Children need to understand what it means to die. The body stops working, the heart stops beating, the person stops breathing. They need to understand that the person will never be a part of the school again, and if the deceased was a teacher or other school employee, someone else will take their place. They also need to know what caused the particular death.

Children need assistance in sorting through all the true and false information that they hear from a variety of sources. When a death occurs in a close knit school or community, there are many sources of information—parents, staff, neighbors and peers. As a result, often the information children hear is inaccurate and even distorted. Children may be confused by seemingly contradictory information, such as what it means to be buried in the ground and living in their memories simultaneously.

#### B. Grieving:

Many child psychologists and thanatologists believe that children do not completely grieve a loss until adulthood. They grieve on and off throughout their growing years in a “hit and run” style. Because children have difficulty acknowledging, understanding, and dealing with the painful feelings that come with a death, they may remain in shock or denial for a long time. They will, however, deal with “bad” feelings in spurts, allowing a little bit of pain at time and going between acknowledging this pain to denying it. These painful feelings include anger, sadness, guilt and blame. Children grieve differently at different periods in their growing-up years. A child’s grief may look different from that of an adult; one minute the child may be teary and the next minute will be immersed in play.

Children need help to make sense of the many, varied, and often conflicting feelings that arise as the result of the death of a teacher or classmates, and they need the opportunity to work through these feelings. Their feelings need to be acknowledged, accepted, and respected. Children have difficulty knowing how they feel, why they feel that way, and talking about their feelings. Adults can help children make sense of their feelings by giving a clear message that it is okay to feel whatever they are feeling. By communicating in language that the children can understand, they provide an opportunity for children to explore their varied feelings.

In order for children to grieve successfully, they need to accept the reality of the loss and the pain that it evokes in them. Then they can begin to adjust to the change in the environment that the loss has created. They need to withdraw the emotional energy they have invested in the loss and reinvest it in a new situation and new relationships. The child’s movement through the tasks of grieving is not a smooth or predictable one; it is an ongoing, erratic, and sometimes lengthy process.

#### C. Commemorating:

Commemorating the death of a teacher, staff member, or peer, provides closure for the child. It allows children to show that they cared for the individual, to feel the support of others, and to say good-bye to the deceased. It provides a time and place for children to confirm the reality of the

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loss, to realize that a change has taken place and to acknowledge the value of the deceased's life. There are formal and informal ways to commemorate a death.

1. Formal Commemorations are funerals, burials, memorial services and dedications. Children need information about what will happen at a formal commemoration, why it happens, and what will be expected of them. Adults should be prepared for a variety of very specific questions from a child. For example, it is typical for children to ask what happens to the dead body. It is important to answer such questions in a calm and matter-of-fact way, giving only the details, which are requested. Children should be given the choice about attending a service or not. Parents need to be involved in this process with the child; however, the school staff is in a position to offer some assistance in the explanation.
2. Informal Commemorations include planting a tree, making a garden, or hanging a picture or plaque which provides a physical reminder of the person who has died. Informal commemorations often take the form of giving equipment or books to the school, or establishing a memorial fund in the person's name to be used to meet future needs of the children. Children should always have a part in the planning and implementation of a commemoration that should be meaningful to them. Adults within the school community should also participate. Finally, the family and friends of the deceased should be consulted and be in agreement with the commemoration.

#### D. Going On:

If children complete the three tasks of "Good Grieving", they should be free to move on. Going on means that the child has a basic understanding of the death that has occurred, and has worked through many of the feelings aroused by the loss. The child may continue to think about the person who has died, but will have increased energy for other aspects of his/her life. The beginning of a school year, returning to the classroom, special events, or anniversaries may, however, continue to arouse memories of the deceased. Adults need to be sensitive to the child's more vulnerable times and be available to children at these times.

### **Recovery and Effective Functioning**

Robert Weiss, bereavement specialist, believes that "recovery" is a problematic term. It suggests a return to one's previous condition, to where one began. Trauma survivors return to a state of health; they do not, however, go back to where they began. On the basis of his studies of bereavement, Weiss suggests that "adaptation", "accommodation", or even "degree of damage", might be more appropriate terms for describing the result of a period of extreme loss. Weiss lists some reasonable expectations that can be considered as levels one can obtain after loss, in order to attain effective functioning in life:

1. Ability to give energy to everyday life.
2. Psychological comfort, as demonstrated by freedom from pain and distress.
3. Ability to experience gratification-to feel pleasure when desirable, hoped-for, or enriching events occur.
4. Hopefulness about the future, being able to plan and care about plans.
5. Ability to function with reasonable adequacy in social roles and as a member of the school or community setting.

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## Conclusion

### LOVE NEVER GOES AWAY

Remember that children any young people will continue to deal with their loss through out their lives. As they gain greater understanding and new insight, they may revisit the loss again and again. This returning is a natural and normal part of everyone's grief. Grief can last a lifetime, but does not have to be the focus of one's life.

We do not lose people. They die, but the love we share with them can never be destroyed. They are a thread of our fabric, an ongoing influence in our life. We chose how that influence will be addressed, but we continue to have a relationship with everyone who has made any kind of impact on our life. It is neither "pathological" nor inappropriate for any one to think, speak or relate to someone who has died. Only when such relationships begin to replace all other kinds of associations does this signal concern.

The people we love will be a part of our life. We don't stop loving someone just because they died. Although painful things do happen, it is not the end of the world for long. We cannot eliminate grief from our children's lives. We cannot find words to soothe the hurt. There aren't any! We cannot shield our children from the twists and turns of living. We cannot protect them from experiencing life.

We can, however, build support and safety nets, not only for our children but for ourselves as well. That requires love and faith, strength and support. Hurt and pain have their lessons and we cannot rob ourselves of the richness of the tapestry that hurt and love weave together. To eliminate one from the loom is to break the thread and steal away the fabric. The gifts within love are obvious. We do not dispute them.

Who I am now can become a challenge rather than a despair if we allow ourselves to grow through the triumphs and trials. Your value, as a chaplain and counselor lies in your ability to listen and support. Continue to reach out and care...just as you do now!

"It is love that asks, that seeks, that knocks,  
that finds, and that is faithful to what it finds."  
Saint Augustine

### Sources and References Consulted

Fox, S.S. (1985) *Good Grief: Helping groups of children when a friend dies*. Boston: New England Association for the Education of Young Children.

Franklin, Alicia S. and Sims, Darcie D. "Helping Children Cope with Death": article in Southern Funeral Director magazine, Vol. 156, No. 3, pp. 26-32, March 2001, Beaufort, SC. Mollegen, Rev. Glenis G.: "Grief," unpublished article, 1980, St. Mark's Church, NY.

### Other Resources

*Healing Your Grieving Heart*: by Alan D. Wolfert, Companion Press, Fort Collins, CO (2000).  
*Lost and Found: A Kid's Book for Living Through Loss*: by Rabbi Mark Gellman and Monsignor Thomas Hartman, William Morrow & Co., New York (1999).

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## Guidelines For Four Chaplains Interfaith/Memorial Service

### The Saga of the Four Chaplains

It was known as Torpedo Junction, the U-boat infested icy waters of the North Atlantic during World War II. On February 3, 1943, the USAT DORCHESTER, an old coastal steamer quickly pressed into military service, was slowly making her way through those waters bound for Greenland.

Most of the men were seasick, and green with nausea. Because they were in submarine waters, the captain directed the men to keep outer gear and life jackets on at all times. Moving among



them were four Army Chaplains: George Fox (Methodist), Alexander Goode (Jewish), Clark Poling (Dutch Reformed), and John Washington (Roman Catholic). The Chaplains talked with and listened to the men - soothing apprehensions, offering encouragement, or sharing a joke. By their concern, their camaraderie with the men and one another, and their very presence, they brought solace.

An enemy submarine, stalking the ship undetected, fired a torpedo toward the ship's aging flank. The missile exploded in the boiler room, destroying the electric supply and releasing suffocating clouds of steam and ammonia gas. Many on board died instantly; some were trapped below deck. Others, jolted

from their bunks, groped and stumbled their way to the decks of the stricken vessel. Taking on water rapidly, the ship began listing to starboard.

Because security reasons prevented the use of distress flares, escort vessels, still close enough to assist, pushed on into the darkness unaware that the DORCHESTER was sinking.

Overcrowded lifeboats capsized; rafts drifted away before anyone could reach them. Men clung to the rails, frozen with fear, unable to let go and plunge into the dark, churning water far below.

The Four Chaplains calmed frightened men, got them into the spare lifejackets, and urged them over the side. The supply of extra jackets ran out with men still waiting. Having decided to remain with the sinking ship, the Four Chaplains either gave to or forced upon frightened servicemen their own lifejackets.

Too quickly, no more lifeboats could be launched and many men were left aboard, but there was more for the Chaplains to do. When last seen, they were standing together on the deck leading the men in prayer. With arms linked in friendship and heads bowed in prayer, they sank beneath

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the waves. Two of those chaplains were Protestant, one was a Catholic, and one was a Jew. Monsignor John McNamara, former Chief of Chaplains of the U.S. Navy, said at a Four Chaplains Award Service, “No casting director in Hollywood could have selected a better cast of characters than these four to portray the basic unity of the American people”.

The self-sacrifice of the Four Chaplains was a heroic act. It was not the only heroic act aboard the DORCHESTER. But it was the identity of these four young men, representing three great faiths of the American people that add symbolism to their sacrifice.

It is our charge to see that this brief, but significant, portion of American history is not lost, and that the lessons of cooperation and selfless service are proclaimed.

**Contact the Chapel at:  
THE CHAPEL OF FOUR CHAPLAINS  
1201 Constitution Avenue  
Philadelphia Naval Business Center, Building 649  
Philadelphia, PA 19112  
TEL: (215) 218-1943  
FAX: (215) 218-1949  
[www.fourchaplains.org](http://www.fourchaplains.org)  
Email: [chapel@fourchaplains.org](mailto:chapel@fourchaplains.org)**

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## **Suggestions for Your Four Chaplains Service**

### **Background**

These community services began to be held in the late 1940's across the nation on or near February 3rd of each year. They are held to honor the Four Chaplains and the other 668 men who perished when the USAT DORCHESTER was torpedoed and sunk on February 3, 1943. Because of the interfaith nature of the sacrificial act of the Four Chaplains, this is an excellent way to bring together people of all races, faiths, and creeds in an observance of a common unity among Americans. We urge your organization to hold a Four Chaplains Observance with this purpose in mind. It is appropriate that this is also the time of National Brotherhood Week.

### **Music**

Elsewhere in this packet is a list of appropriate music for Four Chaplains Services. The sheet music for The Four Chaplains Anthem, sung at Chapel services, is available upon request.

### **Offerings**

Many organizations take an offering during the service for the work of the Chapel of Four Chaplains. These offerings enable us to continue our many worthwhile programs, and are truly appreciated.

### **Guests**

It is a special honor to recognize DORCHESTER survivors, and family members of the victims and chaplains, if any are present. If you tell us the date, time, and location of your service, we can invite these special persons on your behalf.

### **Location**

The service can be held in veterans or fraternal halls, auditoriums, parks, churches, synagogues, and chapels. We recommend that clergy or representatives of the different faith groups be participants. Clergy to represent the Four Chaplains is always impressive.

### **Programs**

Printed programs add to the dignity and importance of the occasion. A copy of the program should be sent to the Chapel of Four Chaplains for the archives.

### **Publicity**

News releases can be sent to local newspapers, television stations, and radio stations. Encourage the media to publicize the upcoming service or to do a follow-up report. Copies of any publicity items should be sent to the Chapel of Four Chaplains for the archives.

### **Introductions**

For a smooth flowing service, it is recommended that minimal introducing be done. Let each participant follow the other as listed in the program. There should be a brief introduction of the main speaker. The person presiding is responsible for keeping the service flowing smoothly.

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### **Rehearsal**

A rehearsal prior to the event always makes for a more effective service.

### **Color Guards / Honor Guards**

Veterans, civic, and fraternal organizations wishing to participate with their color/honor guards, including organizational flags, enhance the service.

### **Focal Points**

To symbolize the tragic sinking of the USAT DORCHESTER, there can be any number of focal points for the service: four lit candles, four red roses, a lifejacket, or four empty seats near the altar or speaker's area. (For a breakfast or banquet, this can be a completely set table for four, but with no one sitting at the Four Chaplains table.)

### **A Final Word**

To make your Four Chaplains Service special and memorable, be sensitive, creative, and enthusiastic!

### **Three Suggested Formats for Four Chaplains Services**

#### **(1) With a breakfast or banquet:**

Posting the Colors  
Pledge of Allegiance  
“America, the Beautiful”  
(Assembly or Solo)  
Welcome  
Invocation  
Meal  
Introduction of Guests  
Homily  
Message  
(focused on the Four Chaplains and sacrificial service)  
Tributes to the Four Chaplains  
(Wreath laying or candle lighting by four clergy or other persons of each faith)  
“Let There Be Peace On Earth”  
(Assembly)  
Benediction  
Retirement of Colors

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**(2) Major program:**

Posting the Colors  
Pledge of Allegiance  
National Anthem  
Welcome  
Invocation  
Introduction of Guests  
The Collect  
(read aloud by Assembly)  
Musical Selection  
(Choral or band)  
Homily  
Message  
(Focused on the Four Chaplains and sacrificial service)  
Tributes to the Four Chaplains  
(Wreath laying or candle lighting by four clergy or other persons of each faith)  
“Let There Be Peace On Earth”  
(Assembly)  
Benediction  
Moment of Silence  
Taps  
Retirement of Colors

**(3) Short program:**

Pledge of Allegiance  
“America, the Beautiful”  
(Assembly or Solo)  
Invocation  
Welcome  
Introduction of Guests  
The Collect  
(read aloud by Assembly)  
Homily  
Message  
(focused on the Four Chaplains and sacrificial service)  
Benediction

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**Suggested Introductory Remarks  
For A Four Chaplains Service**

On February 3, 1943, the USAT DORCHESTER was tragically sunk. Of the 902 young men on board, only 230 survived. Many of those survivors owe their lives to the courage and leadership exhibited by the heroic Four Chaplains, who, in sacrificing their lives, created a unique legacy of brotherhood.

Since 1951, the Chapel of Four Chaplains has spread the message of interfaith cooperation and selfless service, touching the lives of thousands of people across this great country.

There will be thousands of Four Chaplains Interfaith Memorial Services held across the nation on or near February 3rd. This service is a tribute to those courageous Chaplains and the 672 brave young men who lost their lives on that fateful night. Further, this service honors all those who have served, and whose courage and faith have sustained our country.

It is important that we teach our children and youth about these great events and great sacrifices, for they are our future. It is vital for them to understand what selfless service on behalf of others can accomplish.

*This prayer is interfaith in nature, and may be read aloud by everyone at the appointed time in the program. This prayer is a part of each Legion of Honor Award Service sponsored by the Chapel of Four Chaplains.*

**The Collect**

God of our Fathers and our God, we thank You for the unity that the DORCHESTER Chaplains, these four men of God, demonstrated in life and in death.

Unity that is not uniformity.

Unity that strengthens within each of us every worthy loyalty of faith and practice.

Unity that transcends all our differences and makes us one in loyalty to our country and our fellowmen, and to you our God.

Grant us now Your abiding presence and may we remain faithful to the spirit of our Four Chaplains who, having learned to live and serve together, in death were not divided.

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### **Suggested Music For Four Chaplains Services**

*The following is a suggested, but not inclusive, list of music appropriate for Four Chaplains Services. In a gathering of Jews and Christians, it is preferable to have music acceptable to all, or to counter one selection with the other.*

The National Anthem  
The Four Chaplains Anthem  
America, The Beautiful  
How Great Thou Art  
God of Our Fathers  
My Country, 'Tis of Thee  
Battle Hymn of the Republic  
Eternal Father, Strong to Save (Navy Hymn - includes stanza for each branch of military service)  
This Is My Song  
Pomp & Circumstance  
God Bless America  
Let There Be Peace On Earth  
Taps  
Auld Lang Syne

### **Prayer: The Four Chaplains**

Gracious Lord, we ask your blessing upon this gathering. We join together as people of many faiths. We join together as people of different experiences and backgrounds.

Yet we have all come to this sanctuary to share in this time of worship.

Catholics, Jews, and Protestants -- we come together in the house of the Lord, to worship, to praise your name, to thank you for your constant presence in our lives.

And we come together to honor four men -- men who had gone to war as chaplains -- to be the human touch of your love and caring among troops called upon to risk their lives for their country. We honor four chaplains who knew how to love their neighbors as themselves. We are thankful for the lesson they give to the generations -- a lesson of self-sacrifice; a lesson of true brotherhood. With thankfulness, we ask your blessing upon the souls of Clark Poling and Alexander Goode, of John Washington and George Fox.

We pray also for the souls of the men who joined these chaplains in death that February day many years ago. More than 600 men saw the end of their hopes and dreams that icy morning, in the effort to sustain the hopes and dreams of their families at home.

May our hearts feel a special kinship today with those who were aboard the Dorchester when a torpedo hit it... and yet who live and remember the experience, and the loss. We know they must recall the morning with sadness, which has remained with them through the decades.

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Lord, we know the story we remember today is just one fine example of the many times men and women have sacrificed themselves for others. And we know this story is one among many examples of true brotherhood. Yet we single out and hold it before us as a reminder that all persons of all faiths and colors and creeds are capable of showing such courage and such compassion. Such has been true of so many who have served in all branches of service, in times of war and peace. Such has been true throughout the generations.

Help us to see, even today, the times that we might stand-up for that which is most important, and to do so with more concern for others than for ourselves. Help us to recognize the times when we might overlook the insignificant differences between people, and respond to the needs of someone just because he or she is a person in need.

Forgive us for those times in which we participate in the freedoms of our land, yet fail to honor the rights of all Americans. Help us to learn how to show justice in our lives, to love mercy in our relationship with others, and to walk humbly with you at all times.

Thank you, Lord, for watching over us and comforting us in grief. May we also feel your presence in the joy of celebrating your love as it shines through the human spirit of the four chaplains we remember today; as it shines through all who truly love justice and peace.

May all who are present at this service gain wisdom and compassion from worshipping together this day. Amen.

### **ALEXANDER D. GOODE**

(Pause for bell)



Alexander Goode was too young for World War I. While George Fox was winning medals on the battlefield in France, Alex Goode was receiving medals in Eastern High School, Washington, DC, for tennis, swimming and track. He led his class in scholarship too.

He planned to follow in his father's footsteps and become a Rabbi, but that did not keep him from having a laughing, shouting, hail-fellow-well-met boyhood with all the Protestant and Catholic boys in the neighborhood.

When the body of the Unknown Soldier was brought to Arlington Cemetery, Alex Goode attended the ceremonies. He could just as well have ridden that fifteen miles -- for after all -- there were trolleys and buses in Washington, and the Goode family had a fine family car, but Alex thought it showed more respect to walk -- and walk he did -- all the way to Arlington and all the way back....thirty miles. That's how he felt about the Unknown Soldier. Even while training for his calling he joined the National Guard and kept up the active membership.

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He married his childhood sweetheart and they had a daughter. After his call to a synagogue in York, Pennsylvania, he continued his studies at John Hopkins University, forty-five miles away, and earned his Ph.D.

One day in 1943 Mrs. Goode received a telegram from her husband.... “Having a wonderful experience,” it read, and then Mrs. Goode knew that her husband had found a warm companionship with the men with whom he could share his faith and his laughter.

(Drape stole on the Star of David.)

**GEORGE L. FOX**

(Pause for bell.)

George Fox was the oldest. Up in Vermont they called him, “The Little Minister” because he was only five feet seven inches tall. Back in 1917 he lied about his age and enlisted in the Army as a medical corps assistant. He won a Silver Star for rescuing a wounded soldier from a battlefield filled with poison gas, although he himself had no gas mask on. He won the Croix de Guerre - and many months in a hospital with a broken spine - for outstanding bravery in an artillery barrage.



When George Fox came home to Vermont he continued his education and became a public accountant as he had planned. He was successful, happily married, with two children. Then one evening he came home from work and told his wife he wanted to study for the ministry and she approved. So George Fox became a minister. Then war came again. “I’ve got to go,” he told his wife. “I know from experience what our boys are about to face. They need me.” Before he boarded the Dorchester he wrote a letter to his little daughter. She received it after the news that the ship was torpedoed. “I want you to know,” he wrote “how proud I am that your marks in school are so high - but always remember that kindness and charity and courtesy are much more important.”

(Drape stole on Cross.)

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## **JOHNNY P. WASHINGTON**

(Pause for bell.)



Up in Newark, New Jersey, there was once a little Irish boy named Johnny Washington. Things usually aren't easy for poor immigrant folk. But, Johnny had his Father's Irish grin and his Mother's Irish newspapers. Sure, he liked to play ball, just as much as the rest of the kids in his block, but if he took time off from his newspaper route it was just so many pennies less to take home to Mom, and there were nine mouths in the Washington household to feed.

Johnny loved music and sang in the Church choir and Johnny loved to fight. It must have been about the time he decided to become a priest that he was the leader of the South Twelfth Street Boys in Newark, a position which required not only moral suasion but, on occasion, a black eye and a bloody nose.

And Johnny was always laughing, right through his training as a priest and after he was ordained. He played ball in the streets with the boys from his parish; he organized baseball teams, and when the war came along and his boys went into the Army, Father Johnny went right along with them as a matter of course. They say that when the Dorchester went down he was still laughing - laughing and singing and praying to comfort those who could not reach the lifeboats.

(Drape stole on Cross.)

## **CLARK V. POLING**

(Pause for bell)

Clark Poling was the youngest of our Four Men of God. Clark's first letter was written to his father. It was written in square block printing and was addressed by his mother. The letter found Dr. Poling, February, 1918, in a dugout on the Western Front of another World War. The letter read: "Dear Daddy: Gee, I wish I was where you are. Love, Clark." And in exactly twenty-five years, that eager little boy received his wish. Clark was the seventh generation in an unbroken line of ministers of the Gospel. He was ordained in a Dutch Reformed Church and was assigned a pulpit in Schenectady. He married a girl named Betty and they had one little boy, called Corky. A little girl was born to Mrs. Poling at Easter time after the Dorchester went down in February.



When the war came along he did not want to go as a chaplain. "I can carry a gun as well as the next guy," he told his father. "I'm not going to hide behind the Church in some safe office out of the firing line." "I think you're scared" the elder Poling joked. "Don't you know that the mortality rate of the Chaplains is the highest of all? As a chaplain you'll have the best chance in the world to be killed. The only difference is, you can't carry a gun to kill anyone yourself." And so Clark Poling became a chaplain.

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Just before Clark sailed he visited his father and they were alone in Dr. Poling's study when Clark turned to his father and said: "Dad, Dad -- you know how much confidence I have in your prayers, but Dad, I don't want you to pray for my safe return - that wouldn't be fair. Many will not return and to ask God for special family favors wouldn't be fair. No, Dad, don't pray for my safe return -- *just pray that I shall do my duty and something more: pray that I shall never be a coward. Pray that I shall have the strength and courage and understanding of men, and especially pray that I shall be adequate.*" Dr. Poling tells us that was the prayer he prayed. Clark Poling was adequate.

He taught his men not to bear personal hatred for German and Japanese soldiers or civilians. His text was simple. Hate the system that made your brother evil. It is the system we must destroy.

(Drape stole on Cross.)

### **Introduction for Candle Lighting Ceremony**

At 12:30 A.M. on February 3, 1943, the bell on the troopship DORCHESTER rang twice and never sounded again. The DORCHESTER was torpedoed by an enemy submarine and 672 young men paid the supreme sacrifice. Included in the 672 were Four Men of God -- a rabbi, a Roman Catholic priest, a Methodist minister, and a Dutch Reformed minister -- all Army Chaplains.

These Four Chaplains gave their life jackets to save four soldiers and, in so doing, gave up their only means of survival. They were last seen on the deck of the ship with their arms linked together and their heads bowed in prayer as they went to their watery graves in the North Atlantic off the coast of Greenland. Each chaplain received the Purple Heart and Distinguished Service Cross posthumously.

At this time, a candle will be lit for each of the Four Chaplains, as their biographies are read...

### **I Light this Candle in Memory of Chaplain George L. Fox**

George L. Fox, the oldest of the four, knew all about war. Lying about his age in 1917, he enlisted in the Army as a medical corps assistant. He won a Silver Star for rescuing a wounded soldier from a battlefield filled with poison gas, the Croix de Guerre for outstanding bravery in an artillery barrage, and the Purple Heart for wounds. A resident of Vermont, he was a successful accountant and family man when he heard God's call to the ministry. Fox went back to school and later was ordained into the Methodist denomination. When war came, he once again enlisted, telling his wife, "I've got to go. I know from experience what our boys are about to face. They need me." Fox began active duty on August 8, 1942, and served until that fateful morning of February 3, 1943.

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**I Light this Candle in Memory of  
Chaplain Alexander D. Good**

Alexander D. Goode was both an outstanding athlete and scholar. Following in this father's footsteps, this young man known for his laughter and love of life, became a rabbi. While studying for his calling, he joined the National Guard and kept up an active membership. The return of the body of the Unknown Soldier had a profound effect on Goode. He attended the ceremonies, choosing to walk the thirty miles rather than drive or take a bus, because he thought it showed more respect. Goode married his childhood sweetheart and was serving a synagogue in York, Pennsylvania, when World War II broke out. He served on active duty from August 9, 1942 until February 3, 1943.

**I Light this Candle in Memory of  
Chaplain Clark V. Poling**

Clark V. Poling was the youngest of the Four Chaplains and the seventh generation in his family to be ordained in the Dutch Reformed Church. When war came, he was anxious to go, but not as a chaplain. "I'm not going to hide behind the church in some safe office out of the firing line," he told his father. The elder Poling replied, "Don't you know that chaplains have the highest mortality rate of all? As a chaplain you'll have the best chance in the world to be killed. You just can't carry a gun to kill anyone yourself." So Clark Poling left his pastorate in Schenectady, New York, and enlisted as a chaplain. Just before he left for active duty, Clark asked his father to pray for him – "not for my safe return, that wouldn't be fair. Just pray that I shall do my duty...and have the strength, courage, and understanding of men. Just pray that I shall be adequate." Poling began active duty on June 10, 1942, and served until February 3, 1943.

**I Light this Candle in Memory of  
Chaplain John P. Washington**

John P. Washington grew up poor, scrappy, and determined in the toughest section of Newark, New Jersey. One of nine children born to an Irish immigrant family, he was blessed with a sunny disposition, a beautiful singing voice, and a love for music. He also loved a good fight, and was leader of the South Twelfth Street gang when he was called to the priesthood. He played ball with the boys of the parish, organized sports teams and, when war came along, went with his "boys" into the Army. He began active duty on May 9, 1942. His wonderful voice, raised in song and prayer to comfort those around him, could be heard until his final moments on February 3, 1943.

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### Sample Proclamation

WHEREAS, February 3, 20??, will mark the ( ) anniversary of the sinking of the troopship U.S.A.T. Dorchester, which carried to their deaths four U.S. Army Chaplains of three faiths who stood united in prayer as the ship went down; and

WHEREAS, these four Chaplains, Roman Catholic, Jewish and Protestant gave their own life jackets to four soldiers and thus sacrificed their own lives to save the lives of others; and

WHEREAS, the heroic deeds of Chaplains Lt. George L. Fox, Lt. Alexander D. Goode, Lt. Johnny P. Washington and Lt. Clark V. Poling and their combined act of supreme devotion and sacrifice for American liberty and human freedom will be an inspiring and ever shining example of real Brotherhood for all time to the people of the world; and

WHEREAS, we must all see to it that their supreme sacrifice to the common cause of human freedom and justice for all shall not have been in vain;

NOW THEREFORE, I \_\_\_\_\_ (title) of (city/county/etc.) of \_\_\_\_\_ do hereby designate Sunday, February ?, 20??, (1st Sunday in February) to be observed as Four Chaplains Sunday and the week of February ?-?, 20??, (the week following the 1st Sunday in February) be observed as Religious Emphasis Week and call upon all our citizens to commemorate the day and week with appropriate observances in public places and by prayers in their homes and houses of worship.

Given under my Hand and the Seal of \_\_\_\_\_

This \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_  
20??

\_\_\_\_\_ (title)

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## How to Conduct a Department Chaplains Class (A Course Outline)

Rev. Lawrence L. Vollink

### Introduction

Greetings from the Department Chaplain

- ✓ Introduction of class members
- ✓ Purpose of class
- ✓ Scripture & Prayer

As a *priest* (Deuteronomy 20:1-4) he/she prays for the people representing them and asking for God's blessings and presence in all things.

As a *prophet* (Ezekiel 2:3-5) he/she may have to challenge something that may be morally wrong and he will have to speak the truth.

As a *tentmaker* (Acts 18:1-4) he/she gets involved with people by visiting the sick saying words of comfort in time of death and plan services that honor the veteran or family member.

When George Washington appointed the first Chaplain in the Continental Army, the chaplain's role was always to simply bring God to men and to bring men to God, and women and children, too. The Chaplain represented God in all situations.

Today, we have all kinds of chaplains— military, hospitals, prisons, universities, police, and last but not least, veterans. A chaplain is someone who works and lives with people, sometimes wearing the same kind of uniform or hat. He or she may be identified with a Cross or a Star of David. He hears the concerns and special needs of people. He is a friend and encourager and sometimes an informal counselor. He brings harmony to people and organizations. The function and position is to be treated with respect and the person who holds the office must be a person of integrity, a spiritual refresher for the good of all people, so that whoever is appointed or elected to the office, the Chaplain's position will always be one that is desired and appreciated by all.

***“To maintain a joyful family requires much from both the parents and the children. Each member of the family has to become, in a special way, the servant of the others.”***

**Pope John Paul II**

### The Chaplain In The American Legion

The charge from the Installation ceremony states: *“To you is given the spiritual leadership of this Post. You will I know, lend dignity and respect to your office. You should be in close confidence with the commander and the other officers of this Post, and should attend all meetings of the Post. You should be ready upon occasion to take your part in the initiation of new members, the dedication of halls, monuments of colors, and the funeral services for a comrade. All such ceremonies are made more commemorative by the use of our ritual. Into your keeping we place the spirit of comradeship of this Post. May harmony and unity prevail.”*

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The *Officer's Manual* mentions, "...that the Chaplain need not be a clergyman, but he must be capable of moral and intellectual leadership and one who gives dignity and respect to the office. He should be in close touch with the Commander and the other officers of the Post and should attend all meetings of the Post and Executive Committee. The leadership in many of the Post's activities belongs of right to the chaplain; and when his office is filled by the right kind of person, the usefulness of the Post to the community will be greatly increased." The Chaplain's responsibilities involve his/her role in memorials, funerals, and dedication services. The chaplain works with the Post Historian in his grave registration work and those graves are appropriately marked on Memorial Day.

The Chaplain works with the VA hospital and local hospitals in visiting veterans in the hospital and home for spiritual encouragement and prayer. The Chaplain keeps members informed of the sick and those experiencing difficulties.

#### **Discussion: Suggested topics**

- ✓ "Why not take the chaplain's position, it's the easiest in the post?"
- ✓ "Staying in touch with the commander and officers means your now part of the clique?"
- ✓ "We should elect a chaplain who really doesn't have the time for chaplain duties or the time to come to training programs?"

#### **"For God And Country"**

The first four words of the Preamble are "For God and Country." Our country has spiritual foundations. If our spiritual foundations crumble in our nation so goes the nation. The American Legion recognizes that if our nation is to remain great and permanent, God must be an essential part of Americanism. God is the source of all fundamental interests. "The highest role a nation can play is to reflect God's righteousness in national policy and to promote God's purposes in all of life's relationships. The greatest and most significant heritage of our country has been its spiritual heritage. Apart from faith in God, American history has no meaning. In this faith, our institutions were created, our laws enacted, and our liberties secured. Our aim must be the same as that of our Country's Founders, 'that religion must permeate every phase of living.'" The American Legion is continuing a nationwide effort to bring all Americans closer to the Creator, who so bountifully blessed this Country.

#### **Handout: "Religion and The American Legion" by Dr. Thomas C. Faircloth**

##### **What Does A Chaplain Do?**

- ✓ Gives respect to the office. Treat your responsibilities with seriousness and reverence.
- ✓ Work closely with the Commander and other Officers of the Post and recommend action on spiritual activities.
- ✓ Inform membership of upcoming events and coordinate your responsibilities ahead of time.
- ✓ Attend all meetings and be knowledgeable of all activities and key chaplain responsibilities.

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Pray and work on public prayers. Don't read from the manual. Write them out and memorize them. Keep them in a personal prayer book, or if on a card, don't throw it away, but put them in a file for future use. Never say the same prayer. Always make your prayers personal. Keep the Chaplain's Handbook nearby. Also, be a student of prayer. Read books that talk about prayer. Buy books that have special prayers. Know the power that prayer can do for an individual. Be enthused when you pray. Pray loud enough so people can hear. Bring God's presence into the room as you pray. Don't be afraid to use conviction when you pray. We are all sinners, but we have an awesome God who understands us and wants to become involved in our lives.

### **(1) Discussion**

*"What kind of prayers blessed you or when were you appreciated for the prayers that you said for another? What ideas do you have that will make our prayers in The American Legion effective?"*

Reaching out to the sick and those who grieve. Know who they are and keep the Post and District informed so that others may participate in visiting or showing a caring attitude. Two is better than one. Talk to the family or friends and learn of their concerns. Take someone with you to visit. Have several cards on hand. Get many to sign. Past pictures are nice to include in the cards.

### **(2) Discussion**

*"What are the Post's strength and weaknesses when it comes to remembering the sick and those who have lost a loved one?"*

The funeral service. The complete service can be found in the *Manual of Ceremonies*. Remember, talk to the family about the kind of service they desire, about an American Legion service at the funeral home or their wishes about the main funeral service. What about the burial service? Do they have a minister? Do they know about the flag and its ceremony? Were there any requests that the deceased may have given to you that the family is not aware of? Introduce the family member to the Post Service officer as soon as possible. Make your visits brief and to the point. What about meals for the family and what about a meal after the funeral service? Send a letter or card a week or two after the service. It's OK to reminisce of the past good times with family members. Remember, you are God's representative in bringing comfort to that family.

### **(3) Discussion**

Handout "Fold With Care" by Rev. George Schwanenberg.

Write articles for the Post newsletter. These can be difficult at times, but if your heart is attuned to spiritual things in your life, you will become spiritual conscious and articles will become easier to write. Hopefully your column will become the first item that Legionaries will read. It sets the tone to all members that our American Legion is truly for "God and Country."

Memorial Services. At each General meeting, the chaplain can hold a brief memorial or a "Post Everlasting Service" for the passing of a comrade. If not each month, perhaps every three months and most assuredly, once a year, particularly in May a Memorial Service should be held. Invite a

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clergyman to speak. Perhaps there is a military chaplain in the area; Active Duty, Reserves, or National Guard. They are potential members. Send them materials, magazines and newsletters.

Work closely with other American Legion and Auxiliary Chaplains. Work together.  
Family Night. Organize it and take pictures. Make double prints for posting on the bulletin board and a copy sent to the families. Make prayer concerns a highlight of the event. Hand out helpful literature on Americanism and Children and Youth activities.

Flag activities. Visit churches to see if they have flags displayed. Find opportunities to have the Post put together an excellent flag program. Churches are more receptive to activities that do not necessarily interfere with the Sunday Morning Service.

Assist comrades concerning veteran's benefits and wills. Work closely with the Post Service Officer. Obtain the *Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents Booklet* from the VA. Benefits may include: pension to the widow and children; partial reimbursement of funeral expenses; burial in a National Cemetery; burial flag and grave marker. Documentation that may be required; copy of death certificate, discharge papers (DD 214), funeral receipt, marriage certificate, and birth certificates of minor children.

Set aside a special time for the chaplain to say a few words other than the opening and closing of a Post meeting. It may be a time of inspiration.

Certificate of appreciation given to the chaplain, or to people who have done some wonderful things both inside the post or district for community involvement.

Conduct a Four Chaplains' Service in your post. Four Chaplains' Sunday is the first Sunday in February. Contribution may be sent to the Chapel of Four Chaplains at 1201 Constitution Avenue, Philadelphia Naval Business Center, Building 649, Philadelphia, PA 19112 phone (215) 218-1943 fax (215) 218-1949. Internet website [www.fourchaplains.org](http://www.fourchaplains.org) and e-mail [chapel@fourchaplains.org](mailto:chapel@fourchaplains.org).

Award or citation for an outstanding youth or youth group or organization for their accomplishments or achievements to be given at the Post.

Your ideas for what's a Chaplain to do? Ask yourself, what are the strengths and weaknesses within the Post? Discuss them with your Commander. As a leader what can you do to make your Post better. Remember, the Post is counting on your leadership. Leadership from the Chaplain is expected by the members of the Post. Of course you can't do it alone, you'll need everyone to help. Establish some immediate priorities and long range priorities. Set realistic goals. Use a calendar. Tell people of your goals. How much will it cost? Write a report and a proposal to the officers and to the proper committees asking for their help. Request an adoption of the plan. Put your plan into action. Select others to help and delegate. Continue to monitor the progress and report to the Commander and in the monthly meetings or newsletters. Always evaluate as you go along, but don't ever give up. Make changes if necessary. You might have to start over with a new approach and new people. But don't give up!

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### **Closing**

How can we help each other as Chaplains? How can you help me to be a better Chaplain for the good of the Department? How can I serve you better? May every Chaplain know that he or she holds a very important office. May all of your duties be done with reverence and high regard. May you know that there can be no greater honor than to be asked to serve as a Chaplain. May you bring to this office not some social distinction and someone who only offer good invocations. May you lift the office into a solemn and holy privilege. To transmit God is a high prerogative and a holy task of The American Legion Chaplain.

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## **Religion and The American Legion**

Dr. Thomas C. Faircloth

The American Legion has a For God and Country Program. When our forefathers came to this land, they brought some beliefs and ideas with them. We can never sanction some of the things our forefathers did, but we can take heart in one belief they had – the belief in Almighty God. Show me a land where there is no belief in God, and you will show me a land where a lot of people hurt severely. Within our nation and to the shores where many of our citizens have gone, there has been kept alive the fact that we have people who are for God and Country.

The platform includes basic Americanism. When it comes to religion, our nation is different from a lot of nations because we have religious freedom and there is no national or established religion. The result is that people are free to be Jewish, Catholic, Protestant, etc.

“Service to God and Country” in The American Legion is non-denominational. We do not serve God and Country to appease any denomination (and this is not kicking denominations).

“Service to God and Country” is non-sectarian. We do not participate in our religious program to please any “sect” outside denominations.

We need to remember that our program is not a church or synagogue. Once a Legionnaire said to me, “I get more out of my Legion than my Church.” To this I said, “Maybe so, but being a churchman, I do not equate the activities of my Post with my church; if I had to make a choice, I would first of all choose my church.”

In our basic platform, we cooperate with religious groups. To cooperate means we have more to gain than we have to lose. Thus, we have respect for religious bodies.

What is the main purpose in cooperation? It means we all have a reminder that God is the source of rights and privileges. The citizens of the USA need this reminder, and it is surely good for The American Legion. It is said Benjamin Franklin in a meeting of the Constitutional Convention in Independence Hall in Philadelphia in 1787 made one of the greatest speeches of his lifetime when he said: “I have lived, sir, a long time, and the longer I live the more convincing proofs I see of this truth: that God governs in the affairs of men... We have been assured, sir, in the sacred writings that ‘except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.’” Franklin went on to say: “I firmly believe this, and also believe that without His continuing aid we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel.”

Our founding fathers had some wise ideas in their beliefs. The American Legion has recognized this and emphasizes the spiritual foundations upon which our nation rests. Wise Legionnaires believe God needs to be in the religious, social, economic and political life of our nation. Without God, there is no true Americanism.

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## **Background, Heritage and Need**

### **Some Background History**

When our country was still a colony of England, there were people who made covenants with God, and when the Republic was born, God was given His place as the source of all fundamental rights. We have had people from the beginning of America who recognized God and God's purposes as standing above the Nation and the Nation's interests. Many believed "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord."

### **Our Heritage**

American history has no meaning apart from faith in God. It is in it; it cannot be cast out. The light cannot be extinguished. In this faith, our laws have been established, our institutions created and our liberties secured.

### **Needed Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow**

We can see then that the Legion's idea of God and Country was needed yesterday. Think of the vast number of Legionnaires, their children and children's children who have been taught this idea in the past. We can agree that without this, we would be poorer in our thinking.

The Legion's program of God and Country is needed today. We still believe individuals belong to God alone, and the purpose in life is to enhance God's glory and do God's will. When we observe life today, when we turn on the TV, when we read the papers—when we consider all of these, we are aware of the extent to which moral and spiritual values have been marked down, and we know about little children, youth and adults hurting in many areas. The American Legion knowing this is a continuing a nationwide effort to bring all Americans closer to the Creator who has so bountifully blessed our country.

The Legion's program of God and Country will be needed tomorrow, or in the days ahead. Some of the words in a prayer used to open post's meetings are: "Almighty God, Father of all mankind and Judge over nations." Why are these words in there? These words are in there because you and I and all of the human race have business with God, our Creator.

But there are those who say, "Times have changed." Of course, times have changed. Times have always changed. Times will continue to change. On the face of the earth, many civilizations have arisen and fallen, many generations have come and gone, and many wars have been fought, some with battles lost and some with battles won, but God is ever the same and changes not. So in the days ahead all people will continue to be faced with the idea of God and Country.

### **Objectives**

In the objectives we have the words, A. Service to God. Service to God includes regular public worship, daily family prayer, and the religious education of children.

I am always delighted when I see Legionnaires and their families in public worship. I am aware of the words of a lot of people who do not go to public worship. Some say I can worship wherever I am. I will agree that you can. But what I am talking about here is public worship—

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being in the presence of God with others in public. Thus, there is a difference between public worship and private worship.

Individuals and families are encouraged to give adoration to God in public worship. Blessed is the countryside, the town and the city where there is found the public worship of God. People in public worship will be lifted into a closer relationship with their God and family ties will be strengthened. People need power from above, and they can find power in public worship to counteract the daily temptations of greed, lust, hate, selfishness, anger and conceit.

This movement of the Legion is not religion itself, for religion is a personal relationship between an individual and his/her God. At the same time, the objectives of organized religion and those of Americanism coincide. How beautiful then is the idea of The American Legion and organized religious bodies walking side by side in promoting the public worship of God, who is the author of all rights and privileges.

Service to God can include daily family prayers. During our day, this may be harder to do for some families, since the mother and father may work at different hours, but they can pray together when opportunities avail. Children can be involved in good activities that can interfere with getting together with the family, but they too can do so when opportunity avails. We can be sure that families, which have prayed together, are very strong in spirit and have a knot that binds them tightly together. Through the practice of prayer together, a family can develop a partnership of faith, hope and love strong enough to tackle problems that arise.

The American Legion's Service to God can make mothers and fathers conscious of the need and help of family prayer in the home. The habit of regular family prayer, Bible reading and other pertinent religious reading can contribute effectively to the spiritual enrichment of family life.

Service to God and Country makes use of The Religious Education of Children. Parents are on the spot. It is hard for children to believe in God if their parents do not have the faith. However, there are times when children pick up healthy ideas from their peers who are from homes where the example is set in religious training, but parents who have little or no regard for the religious training of children are not being fair to their children. It is sad to think that thousands upon thousands of American children are growing up without religious training. Let this happen long enough and our nation will suffer. People need God's Divine Counsel and Guidance throughout life. If children are not imbued with the truth of the Supreme Authority, their respect for such things as law, government and justice will be weakened.

Legionnaires will be using wisdom when they make parents more aware of their responsibility. How true it is that youth need to be taught knowledge that is theirs through the inheritance of the human race and knowledge in the thinking process of their day. Also, it is important that they master the skills and tools that will give them their daily bread. The greatest duty, however, for parents is the production in their children qualities that give them character to take their places among the masses, or the larger moorings of society, and this can best be accomplished through religious training.

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Another thing found in the objectives is B. Service to Country. Every aspect of our American way of life is embraced in "Service to God and Country." Along with preventing the spiritual decay of America, citizens need to have a spirit of positive Americanism, and this entails respect for law and order, reverence for authority and awareness of our human rights and freedom. So the Legionnaire by his/her service to country is involved as a person with the community and nation.

Go out into any community and look at the people who serve. For the Legionnaire, this service is an individual responsibility. If our purpose is to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the Community, State and Nation, we are set apart as men and women of service.

Our service goes beyond our service to church, synagogue and post to all people. True, we cannot do everything, but all can and should be of service. A good start is to strengthen ourselves as individuals morally, spiritually, mentally and physically. Citizenship asks us to be responsible, to give of some time, talent and means to do it. Legionnaires can be examples of integrity, self-sacrifice and hard work.

We are not to forsake the development of our communities. Our devotion to mutual helpfulness sort of glues us to service to community. Legion posts and Auxiliary units can give more thought to making the community a decent place to live and more service to the whole community. We can be allies to welfare agencies to help people like the handicapped, mentally retarded and mentally disturbed.

In community service, the training of youth and the preparation of young Americans to take up responsibilities for tomorrow are of vital concern to the Legion. Give some concern to ideas like:

- ✓ The moral and spiritual values in our basic American documents.
- ✓ Renewed interest in our country's history and the things that made our country great.
- ✓ The acceptance of responsibilities as well as rights of citizenship.
- ✓ The spirit of love and service for God and Country.
- ✓ Self-discipline, self-reliance, thrift and industry, and the ideals of honesty, loyalty and personal responsibility.
- ✓ The raising of the level of youth physical fitness.
- ✓ Cooperation with other agencies to eliminate juvenile delinquency and school drop-outs.

Service to Country includes our Nation. Legionnaires repeat often the words, "to uphold and defend the Constitution." Service to Nation is one of the primary objectives of The American Legion.

The American Legion is to hope and work for the survival of the nation. Changes come, and there is no way to prevent change. Change can be good if it enhances the conditions of citizens for the better. Legionnaires are responsible for judging and criticizing the kind of change permitted. A question always is "Does it improve the lot of people?"

There are times when citizens are very critical of our nation, and people do have the right to redress. But with all our criticism, most of us would rather live here than in other nations of the

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world. Think of other nations and how they do things and then compare that to our nation. This in itself would tell us we had rather be here. Our nation gives us opportunities. May we avail ourselves of them. As we do, may we remember always “service to the nation” is a good objective.

### **How to Implement the Program**

The National Chaplain has a responsibility. He can encourage delegates to the National Convention. He can give leadership nationally as he meets with national leaders and travels to necessary functions. He can be an exemplary leader for Department Chaplains and chaplains of Auxiliary Units. We have a way of looking up to the National Chaplain and expecting his leadership. If he does well in this, we are blessed. If he casually takes care of his responsibility, we are let down.

A communication to department and Auxiliary unit chaplains as soon as possible after his selection is appreciated by so many of us because we appreciate the work of the National Chaplain and the image of the office. A piece of correspondence encouraging us in the God and Country program has power in it. A few words of thanks for our labors and a little bit of a large bit of challenge impress upon us that we have a National Chaplain who cares for us and is concerned about the work where we live.

*Implementing the program also places responsibility on The Department Chaplain. Here we would not forget the Auxiliary chaplain either, but I fully believe that the Department Chaplain is primarily responsible.*

The department chaplain should be in close association with the department commander and other officers in the department. Working with all these officers can have an impact for good.

Cultivating the friendship of the auxiliary unit chaplain is a “must” for the promotion of God and Country in both the department and the auxiliary. The department chaplain is always wise to tell the auxiliary chaplain about the National Chaplains conference and encourage attendance.

Before the department, the department chaplain should bring his plans and give reports on such. This is also wise for the auxiliary chaplain.

As to other responsibilities, one could be to conduct Chaplain Conferences for post and auxiliary chaplains. With the cooperation of the auxiliary chaplain and officers, plus department officers, each department in our nation could see symbols of the work in our chaplains. The leadership of presence, proclamation and caring will give far-reaching meaning to Legionnaires and auxiliary members all over the department.

*Post and auxiliary unit chaplains have a responsibility. This is responsibility on the local scene. Post and auxiliary members do expect some leadership, and they place this leadership in their chaplains. Without leadership from chaplains on the local scene, the God and Country program will be of little value, and the objectives of “God and Country” will suffer.*

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For effectiveness, planning is imperative. Needs of the local scene need to be discovered and priorities for the short and the long range need to be brought forth. An effort to make The American Legion and its work powerful on the local scene demands more than “business as usual” for chaplains in posts and auxiliary units. Local chaplains need a plan for the work, and they need to present this plan to their posts and auxiliaries and ask for approval of the plan, plus necessary finances. A schedule of activities of chaplains and their work can be held up before the offices and membership.

Local chaplains need to give earnest heed to leadership and chaplains conferences. When chaplains attend these, they learn from those leading the conferences and from the work of other chaplains. From others we can receive; to others we can share.

### **More discussion about implementation on the local scene**

The sources mentioned in the outline can be very helpful, and they need the attention of all the officers, along with the chaplains. In planning meetings by the officers of Posts and Auxiliaries, the God and Country program ought to have a prominent place. Leadership requires responsibility from chaplains; otherwise, chaplains will be found wanting.

In addition to all things put forth thus far, I suggest the following:

- ✓ Speakers
- ✓ Letters and Cards
- ✓ Special Occasions to Focus Attention of God and Country
- ✓ Children’s Nights
- ✓ Christmas Banquets
- ✓ Regular Post and Auxiliary Meetings
- ✓ Signs on Post Grounds
- ✓ Awards and Citations
- ✓ Catholic, Jewish and Protestant Memorial Bibles
- ✓ Grace Cards for Meals
- ✓ Youth Programs in the Community
- ✓ Cooperation with Community Clergy
- ✓ Newspapers, Radio and TV
- ✓ Four Chaplains Sunday
- ✓ A Chaplain’s Calendar
- ✓ The Prayers of the Chaplain
- ✓ Patriotic and Memorial Services

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## **Fold With Care**

Rev. George Schwanenberg

*The mourners are hushed as The American Legion pallbearers raise the flag from the casket and bring it taut. The final act of another veteran's life on earth is carried out against this solemnity of the Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery in San Antonio, Texas.*

*The Reverend George Schwanenberg pauses and says, "We have some visitors with us here today. So if I may, I would like to explain why we fold the flag—that flag he loved so well—to honor our late comrade." And then Rev. Schwanenberg says:*

"We first fold this flag to the left, as a symbol of life. We fold it again to reaffirm our belief in God's eternal life.

We fold to the left to form a triangle to represent our heart, for it is through our hearts we pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States and to the republic for which it stands; one nation under God indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

We fold again to the left, signifying our weaker nature, for America trusts in God and we turn to Him in time of trials as well as in triumph.

We fold to the right, in remembrance of those who 'gird up thy sword hand' for it is those men and women of our armed forces who protect this land and this flag from all enemies, whether they be found within or without the boundaries of this republic.

We fold to the right in tribute to this nation 'that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from this earth.'

We fold to the left in homage to the one who conquered 'the valley of the shadow of death' that we shall see the light of day. Also, this fold honors mother, for whom this flag flies on Mother's Day.

Again, we fold left in silent tribute to our nation's women, for it is in their courage, honor and fidelity that those who created this land were guided.

The fold to the right is tribute to fathers, who by their example, consecrate those who came after them.

We fold the strips towards the stars, for the stripes portray those 13 original colonies that founded this republic, embodied in 50 sovereign states and the stars cover the stripes.

We fold to the left and create a triangle. In the eyes of our Jewish citizens it proclaims the seals of the Ancient Kings of Israel and glorifies the God of Abraham, Moses, and Isaac.

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Again, we fold to behold, in the eyes of the Christian, the sign of the Trinity, the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost.

When we come to the final fold, the stars cover the stripes and echoes the motto, ‘IN GOD WE TRUST,’ and the flag takes on the appearance of a cocked hat ever reminding us of the soldiers who served under General George Washington, and the sailors and Marines who served under John Paul Jones, and they, followed by their comrades and shipmates in the armed forces of the United States, have preserved and defended for us the rights, and privileges and freedoms we enjoy today.”

*The pallbearer turns and places the flag on the Chaplain’s arm. He approaches the family and says in a quiet voice, “The government of the United States of America presents to you, through The American Legion, the flag under which our late comrade served.”*

*The veteran’s spouse smiles through the tears as the firing squad fires three volleys in final salute. The plaintive strains of “Taps” echo through the cemetery and the tug anew at the listeners’ hearts.*

*This ceremony has been performed many times by the Rev. Schwanenberg. Over time National Cemetery representatives, Mr. Carl “J.J.” Johnson and Robert Galan, realizing the comfort it brought to families and the dignity it bestowed on the service, received permission from Cemetery Director Joe Ramos to incorporate the narration, when appropriate, in funerals. Visitors from around the country have been touched by this eloquent rendition of the meaning of the folding of the flag of these United States.*

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## Chaplains in Times of Crisis

Rev. James T. Akers

Text:

Luke 21:25-28

“There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars;  
and on the earth distress among nations confused by  
the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint  
from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world,  
for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.  
Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with  
power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take  
place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption  
is drawing near.”

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There are certainly a lot of terrible things happening in our world today that are cause for deep concern: in addition to the fear of terrorism, we are in the midst of an economic recession, many have had their retirement investments wiped out, unemployment is on the rise, the newspapers and television bring us fresh doses of bad news every day.

Here is the lead paragraph from a magazine article: “Not in the lifetime of most men has there been so much grave and deep apprehension. The domestic economic situation is in chaos. Our dollar is weak through out the world. Prices are so high as to be utterly impossible. Of our troubles man can see no end.” Is this from *Time* or *Newsweek*? No, it is from an article in *Harpers Weekly* in the year 1857!

For some reason people have always believed the present time in which they live to be the greatest crisis in the history of the world. Today, I would like to suggest that there are at least three ways, we as Christians can help people, in our Legion family and others who need support in uncertain times.

### **First, we can help those who break down in the face of crisis**

A pastor/psychologist once said that anxiety was the result of not knowing who you really are, and to whom you really belong. That’s the problem, isn’t it? Dr. Karl Menninger said that when we feel on the verge of a breakdown, the best thing we can do is go out and help somebody else! It seems to me that Chaplains do this every day. We can help people manage their fear. I was giving a talk before local hospice workers. I began by saying, “If we die”---then I realized there is no “if” about it. All of us are going to die! Nobody escapes this reality. I read a story about a priest who announced to his congregation one Sunday: “Every member of this Parish will one day die!” To this, a fellow in the back row let out a chuckle. The Priest was taken aback and admonished the man for snickering at what he thought was a solemn moment. He asked: “Why did you snicker when I said that each member of this Parish will one day die?” The man replied: “Father, I’m not a member of this Parish!”

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Life is terminal for all of us. The real question is not how many years we can put into our lives, but how much life we can put into our years. In Second Corinthians 4, we read “The outward man does indeed wear and tear, but every day the inward man receives fresh strength.” That’s the way its supposed to be for us as caring Chaplains. We need to assure those who are broken in spirit that God renews us day by day, and is always wit us. We don’t share that truth with hurting peoples as often as we should.

**Second, we can help those who in crisis, react by throwing away their faith**

In crisis, some people push the panic button, throw overboard their morals, their values, and their principles. Some even throw away their Faith. One of the greatest sermons ever preached is titled: “But When Life Tumbles In, What Then?” It was preached by a great Scots minister, Arthur John Gosip on the Sunday following his wife’s sudden death. He said: “So many people’s religion is a fair weather affair. A little rain, and it runs and crumbles; a touch of strain, and it snaps. So long as we feel God’s will runs parallel to ours, we follow cheerfully. But the moment they cross or clash, when life grows difficult and we don’t understand how apt faith is to fail us just when we have need of it!” “I do not understand this life of ours. But still less can I comprehend how people in trouble can fling away peevishly from their Faith. In God’s name, flee to what? Haven’t we lost enough without losing that too? You people in the sunshine may believe the Faith, but we in the shadow must believe it. We have nothing else.” Gosip was right and his sermon has brought comfort to countless people.

There is an incident reported in a book I was reading about Chaplains in the Civil War. It concerns the most widely reported and oft-recalled general absolution given by Father William Colby of the Irish Brigade on the second day of Gettysburg: (I quote)

***Colby stood on a large rock in front of the Irish Brigade, saying that each one could receive the benefit of the absolution—he urged the men to do their duty reminding them of the high and sacred nature of their trust as soldiers, and the cause for which they fought. Catholic and Non-Catholic alike bowed their heads, and even cynical Gen. Winfield S. Hancock removed his hat and bowed in reverential devotion.” Colby intended the General Absolution to be for all, irrespective of religion or region, who would fight that day.***

Here was a chaplain who saw a great opportunity to bring God’s comfort and blessing to those who were facing death. We as Legion and Auxiliary chaplains are not called upon to do something as dramatic, but we should be a “Visible Reminder of the Holy” to those about us. If ever there was a time when we, as chaplains, need to be visible in our communities and states, it is now! Chaplains need to be involved in local ministerial alliances and let other religious leaders know we want to help them with their needs. I like that scene in Shakespeare’s play “Julius Caesar,” when Brutus and Cassius are conversing:

“There is a tide in the Affairs of men,  
Which taken at the flood, leads on to Fortune:  
Omitted, all the Voyage of their life  
Is bound in shadows and in miseries.  
On such a full sea are we now afloat,

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And we must take the current when it serves,  
Or lose our ventures.”

I think there is a message here for us. We are on “a flood tide” in America, and we can move the Legion and Auxiliary to a higher level of visibility and service. When we reach out to others in the wider community, it is amazing how God will use you to help them.

**Third, we can, in times of crisis, help people break through to God!**

Harry Emerson Fosdick said in a hymn, we need to have a great faith “for the living of these days.” We need to hear the words of another hymn which says: “oh where are kings and empires now, of old that went and came? But Lord, Thy church is praying yet, a thousand years the same.”

Well not quite the same-but close. Remembering the mighty empires of Rome, Egypt, Babylonian, Assyria, and Greece, which seemed so all-powerful at the time, but which all went down the drain of history, Martin Luther wrote these magnificent words: “So they puff themselves up by power alone, and everybody supposes them to have won, when God pricks the bubble, and it is all over!”

That sounds like it could apply to our world, four centuries later, doesn't it? No, the world isn't going down the drain. The *Bible* tells us it is going to God. It may be going there by a mighty circuitous route, but it is going there!

Sometimes we imagine that things must have been easier in the “good old days,” whenever that was. There is a sentimental old Sunday School song which talked about Jesus' world, and then had the refrain, “How I would like to have been with Him then.”

I'm not so sure we would have liked it. It was a cold, heartless world, filled with political upheavals, terrorism, epidemics, and crises on every side. But Jesus rose above it and so did those who followed Him. Paul wrote: “We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair, persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.” (II Cor. 4:8-9)

The J.B. Phillips translation of this is: We may be knocked down, but we are not knocked out!

Isn't that great! Four times in a row, Paul uses that glorious word “but.” That word contains the New Testament proclamation of hope. We may suffer setbacks, but that doesn't exhaust God's possibilities. On that first Good Friday, “Pilate set a seal upon the tomb.” BUT “on the first day of the week, the stone was rolled away!” So we do not lose heart. We believe that God is at work-even in times of crisis.

Wendell Phillips was a great 19th century orator and opponent of slavery. One day he sat by a fireside talking with a young friend about his own younger days. The veteran abolitionist completely lost himself in the thrilling tale of the struggle for freedom and abolition of slavery in these United States. The youth sat enthralled, then, under the spell of the stories, he rose to leave.

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“Mr. Phillips,” he said, as he took the old man’s hand, “If I had lived in your time, I think I would have been heroic too!”

Phillips replied: “Young man, you ARE living in my time. And in God’s time. Be sure of this—No man would have been heroic then who is not heroic now!” You who have the honor to serve as Chaplains in the Legion and Auxiliary, have that same opportunity today. My fellow Chaplains, how shall we live and help others live, in times of crisis? Why, the same way we live in all other times: as Christians, by the grace of God.

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## Dealing With Death, Dying and Terminal Illness

### “Thoughtful Care for the Dying”

Rev. Lawrence L. Vollink

#### The Meaning of Dying

One of my favorite verses of the Bible is Ecclesiastes 3:1 “For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die.” That says to me we have crises in our lives, major or minor, large or small. Dying is a final crisis. How we handle the crisis can be life changing. In fact, a “crisis” in its original Greek context means a decision which involves evaluation, judgment, and choice. A crisis can become a highly significant turning point in one’s life, as one evaluates, judges, and makes choices to change or not to change. The Serenity Prayer helps to make the change: “Lord, give me the serenity to accept what cannot be changed, the courage to change what should be changed, and the wisdom to distinguish the one from the other.” Can we allow the dying crisis to be a part of living and bring a positive change in one’s death experience?

Bill has just been told he has a serious disease of the lungs. He’s a 52-year old truck driver and now in the hospital. He belongs to The American Legion and you are his chaplain. He tells you, “When I came in here, I believed that I would never really die. I thought death is only an illusion. When I was told what I have, when I realized that I would die because of it, I felt like I had been hit by a Mack truck! I couldn’t believe it. I couldn’t talk about it. I wanted to, but I just couldn’t find the right words. I didn’t even know the right questions to ask. I guess I’ve lived as though things would always be the same.”

Bill began his crisis with a struggle on what dying meant to him. His reaction is generally the same as any human being. He is shocked. He is not ready to make any decisions or get close to thinking clearly about his death. He felt betrayed. His awareness became his emotional pain as well as physical suffering. As the struggle to make sense of his suffering, his expectations for life and death changed. The occasion of Bill’s suffering became the experience through which he resolved his conflict. As his friend, you begin to help Bill by giving him thoughtful care in his dying experience.

What does “dying” mean to you? The definitions can be very broad depending on one’s culture, religion, and historical settings. Generally, what we expect life to be and the meaning we attach to the ending of life, defines what dying means to us. Glen Davidson, author of *Living With Dying* points out four ways of looking at life and death. *First, if I expect life to be unending (uninterrupted) then dying seems to be an illusion (that it can’t really happen to me).* We hear Bill saying, “I’ll be fine in no time.” Our friends tell him, “Keep the faith, Bill, you’ll get through this with no problem!” But if it goes bad, then Bill thinks he has no real faith. *Second, (it could be) if I live life as a vocation (job), then dying is an intrusion.* Bill was the best driver on the road. “Life is defined by the good we do.” But now this dying has stopped Bill in his tracks, he’s worthless now. *Third, (it could be) if life is a threat, then dying is an escape.* “Thank goodness, my life is ending all of these painful experiences – nobody has to be concerned with me anymore.” No longer does he have to think about survival anymore. Death is an escape. *Fourth, (it could be) if I accept life as a gift, then dying is part of the given.* Bill realized that life

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itself is precious and that dying to can become a precious event or process. He sees his life and dying as a giving of life – a gift for those around him. So he allows himself to be touched with love as he touches others with his love. The dying process for Bill becomes Living with dying event.

A very successful surgeon, Dr. Robert Mack, wrote what he experienced when he was told he had lung cancer. There was a time when he was devastated, bewildered, and very frightened. Afterwards he said, “I am happier than I have ever been. These are truly among the best days of my life. It became clear to me that was a time of real choice. I could sit back and let my disease and my treatment take their course, or I could pause and look at my life and ask, “What are my priorities? How do I want to spend the time that is left?” One of the really ironic things about the human experience is that many of us have to face pain or injury or even the possibility of death in order to learn the real purpose of being and how best to live a rewarding life. Dr. Mack made the choice to change in his dying experience.

It would be awesome if that was the reaction of all dying persons, but we know it’s not the case. The person and his family members are torn by anguish. It is not so much outward as it is inward agony – full of depression and despair.

### **Our Response to Dying**

Keep in mind, Dr. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross’s theory on the five emotional stages of dying:

Stage 1 – Denial and Isolation “No...not me”

Stage 2 – Anger “Why me?” Inward anger begins to isolate them.

Stage 3 – Bargaining “God, I’ll go to church if you get me well”

Stage 4 – Depression “I don’t want anyone around me”

Stage 5 – Acceptance “What can I do while I have time left?”

Added to these stages could be level six – Hope. “God will bring me through this. Maybe God will bring about a new cure for this illness.” He begins to be in touch with the significant others in his life. Hope may be in all of these stages. We say he is “going through the valley of the shadow of death.” The time spent in each stage varies and can go back and forth in its stages.

Our role is to listen, clarify, honor, accept, and be fully present, as a fellow human being, communicating our trust in this person. It’s important that we do not impose our strong death and dying issues or feelings on him/her in the dying process. We are to “let the person be” in their own way of dying as they choose. It means we can accept their feelings of sadness, anger, resentment, guilt, depression, sorrow, and envy. It means we can let him share these feelings with another human being. Since most of us are uncomfortable with these feelings during our lifetime, it makes it doubly difficult to accept these feelings when a person is dying. If we cannot accept them, the dying person “dies alone.” Sometimes the behavior chosen by the dying person is not what we would choose. Can we accept it? Or will we be with him so that we can tell him what he must do to die? The ideas and theology (beliefs) of the dying person may not be our beliefs. Can we accept that? When we accept whatever he shares with us, then he is free to explore his own unique way of dying, and he continues to move through the stages with his own sense of timing. As he goes through the stages we may find ourselves going through the same stages as well. We are not there to protect our own thoughts on dying, but to love him when he

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needs our love and friendship the most. To love is to affirm the worth of the dying person. To love is to enjoy the dying person. To love the person is let him be responsible as well. We are to help the person complete whatever is unfinished in his life when he asks us, and make ourselves available to him.

How far can a dying person go into the valley of the shadow of death? Someone said they are willing to go as far as they can go, if we are free to go with him. The most positive outlook for a dying person is that he wants to be loved and accepted and responsible in communion with significant others in his life. He wants to share his death with us, as he has shared his life with us. He is ready! Are we?

### **Triumphant Dying**

A 66-year old teacher, with two daughters married with families, was confined to the hospital the last four weeks of her life. She had a sense of timing about the approach of her end of life. Friends came to see her and she told them what each of them meant to her. She had written out instructions to her daughters about her belongings and the way she wanted to be buried. When friends were uneasy in her presence or tried to play games about the reality of the situation, she very calmly, yet strongly assured them: “We don’t have to be afraid. Parting is difficult so let’s cry together for a little while; then we can talk.” And that is what they would do. Several days before she died, she called together each daughter with her family and celebrated their reunion. Her business done, she asked an old and dear friend to be with her until the end. As she grew weaker, there was less and less conversations, but words were not necessary. She died in the manner for which she prepared—at peace.

“Life completed if life related, invested with love, and full of meaning. Love unsevered by dying is living in triumphant.” Glen Davidson

### **Transcultural Needs of Patients in the Religious and Spiritual Realm**

Patients bring all of their life and experience with them when they come to the hospital. If we are unfamiliar with their personal faith and practice they (or their families) are often eager to teach us—if we are willing to learn. We cannot make adequate judgments in relation to their health care on the basis of their religion. We take them as they come. As professionals, we do make judgments of how what they believe and do is intertwined with their hospital care. We can make helpful observations that can help us care for them on the basis of their spiritual health or need.

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## Signs of Spiritual *Health*:

### Need for meaning and purpose in life

- Expresses that she/he has lived in accordance with her/his value system in the past
- Expresses desire to participate in religious rituals
- Lives in accordance with her/his value system at present
- Expresses hope in life after death (or peaceful acceptance death as end of life)
- Expresses hope in the future

### Needs to receive love

- Expresses hope in life after death
- Expresses confidence in the health care team
- Expresses feelings of being loved by others and God
- Expresses feelings of forgiveness by others and God
- Expresses desire to perform religious rituals that they believe will result in a good ending
- Trusts others/God with the outcome of a situation in which they have no control

## Signs of Spiritual *Problems*:

### Need for meaning and purpose in life

- Expresses that she/he has no reason to live
- Questions the meaning in suffering and death
- Expresses despair
- Exhibits emotional detachment from self and peers
- Jokes about life after death inappropriately

### Needs to receive love

- Worries about how the rest of their family will manage after their death
- Expresses feelings of a loss of faith in God
- Expresses fear of dependence
- Does not discuss feelings about dying with those who care about them
- Does not call on others for help when they need it
- Expresses fear of tests and diagnosis
- Expresses feeling a lack of support by others
- Behaves as they “should” by conforming to the behavior of a “good” person or patient
- Refuses to cooperate with plan as agreed
- Expresses guilt feelings and fear of God’s anger
- Confesses thoughts and feelings about which they are ashamed
- Expresses anger with self/others
- Expresses ambivalent feelings toward God
- Expresses despondency during illness
- Expresses resentment toward God
- Expresses loss of value due to decreased abilities

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### **Need to give love**

- Expresses love for others through actions
- Seeks the good of others

### **Need for hope and creativity**

- Asks for information about their condition realistically
- Set realistic personal health goals
- Uses time during illness constructively
- Values their inner self more than their physical self

### **Need to give love**

- Worries about the financial status of family and separation from family
- Worries about separation from others through death

### **Need for hope and creativity**

- Expresses fear of loss of control
- Is unable to do creative pursuits due to illness
- Expresses boredom
- Exhibits overly dependent behaviors
- Expresses fear of therapy
- Denies reality of their condition
- Expresses anxiety about future of marriage, parenting, career

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## Veterans And Hospice Care

### Rev. Lawrence L. Vollink

The purpose of hospice is to provide support and care for veterans in the final phase of terminal disease so that they can live fully and comfortably as possible. Hospice affirms life and regards dying as a normal process and hospice neither hastens nor postpones death. Through personalized services at the VA or local hospice organizations, veterans can attain the necessary preparation for a death that is satisfactory to them. Dying people have the potential to learn, teach, console, enjoy, plan and laugh during this period of living. Veterans have the right of becoming informed of their disease, treatments, prognosis, and alternatives that are available to them. Veterans have the right to accept or refuse treatments. Family caregivers have special roles and they may impact on the veteran's wishes. Hospice provides supportive help to families who may have adjustments to make in their loved one's illness and death. Hospice is dedicated to the relief of symptoms and the promotion of care.

“The veterans we serve today have survived the battles – battles they fought to preserve our freedom. But now, over 1500 of these veterans die every day. It is our privilege and our responsibility to be there for them, to offer comfort, support and care as they face their final days. Together, with pride and urgency we steadfastly pursue our VA mission in hospice and palliative care – to honor veterans’ preference for care at the end of life.” (Dr. Thomas Edes, Chief, Offices of Geriatrics and Extended Care, Dept of VA)

Historically, the VA implemented a new policy in 1992 indicating that all veterans should be provided access to a hospice program, either within the VA system or through referral to a community hospice agency. In 1999, the initiative of pain as a 5<sup>th</sup> vital sign was adopted in all VA facilities, and VA physicians prescribed palliative care education and internal medicines. This created resources and development of hospice and palliative care programs within all of the VA hospitals. In 2001, the VA launched its VA Hospice and Palliative Care Initiative through generous grants by the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization. It focused on improving veterans’ access to hospice and palliative services within the VA and in the community and included efforts to improve end-of-life care education and facilitate the development of VA/hospice partnerships. Currently, all VA facilities have hospice consult teams that involve nursing, medicine, social work, and chaplain services. I highly recommend for you to visit the VA Medical center and know your hospice team!

#### Questions and answers

*Who do I contact with questions about the VA?*

Each VA has a designated Palliative Care Coordinator who is able to answer questions.

*If an enrolled veteran does not have Medicare, will the VA pay for the hospice care?*

Yes, Hospice and Palliative care is part of the VA's Medical Benefits Package, for enrolled veterans.

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*How does a veteran qualify for VA paid hospice care?*

Under the VA Medical Benefits Package, an enrolled veteran must be diagnosed with a life-limiting illness, decide that the focus of care is on comfort rather cure, have life expectancy, deemed by a VA physician, of six (6) months or less if the disease runs its normal course, and accepts hospice care.

*What is the VA's responsibility in terms of offering hospice and palliative care?*

Veterans who choose Medicare retain their eligibility for VA care and benefits.

*Does a veteran need to have a service connected condition in order for VA to provide hospice?*

No

*Can veterans continue to use the VA and utilize the Medicare hospice benefit?*

Yes

*I have a veteran who is in need of community in-patient hospice care; will the VA pay for room and board?*

If the veteran is placed by VA in a community nursing home for the purpose of hospice care, the cost of care including the nursing home portion of the care is covered by the VA hospice benefit. This will also include home hospice care. Veterans who choose Medicare retain their eligibility for VA care and benefits.

*What is the cost of end-of-life care provided to the veteran at the VA Medical Center?*

Inpatient hospice at the VA is of no cost to the veteran or the veteran's family.

*How shall we model the special needs of veteran at the end-of-life?*

- A. Total Pain - physical, psychological (emotional), social, and spiritual.
- B. Physical distress at end-of-life.
- C. Psychological distress with advanced illness.
- D. Social distress with advanced illness.
- E. Spiritual distress with advanced illness.

*"The basic structure of the spiritual life is founded on a deep appreciation of the many levels of an individual's awareness. Unique to the Hospice setting is the philosophy of providing an atmosphere in which the person may live fully and experience life in a variety of levels. To look beyond the physical needs of the terminally ill to an appreciation of the spiritual is to assure the individual that every effort will be made to prove the peace of mind that is fundamental to death and dignity."*

Sister Teresa M. McIntire, CSJ

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# Appendix

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## Regular Post Meeting Format

American Legion meetings shall be opened in the following manner:

- ✓ Post the Colors
- ✓ Invocation
- ✓ Pledge of Allegiance
- ✓ POW/MIA Ceremony
- ✓ Recite the preamble of the Constitution of The American Legion
- ✓ Meeting
- ✓ Benediction
- ✓ Retire Colors

A detailed example of a regular meeting format can be found in the *Post Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies*.

***“When Freedom does not  
have a purpose, when it does  
not wish to know anything  
about the rule of law  
engraved in the hearts of  
men and women, when it  
does not listen to the voice of  
conscience, it turns against  
humanity and society.”  
Pope John Paul II***

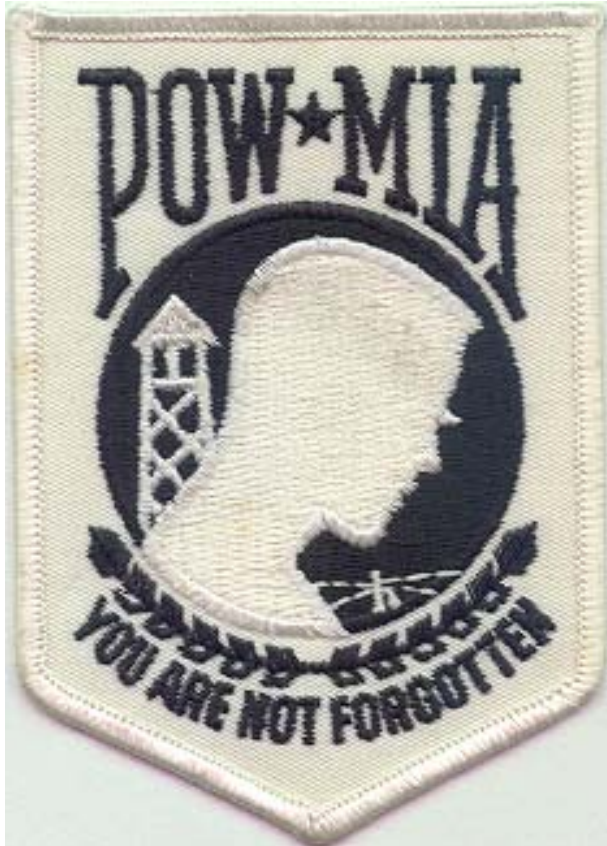
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## How to Conduct a POW/MIA Ceremony

### POW/MIA Ceremony Sample 1

#### Set up preparations

POW/MIA flag draped over chair near the podium.



#### Ceremony:

**“Resolution 288”**, adopted at the 67th National Convention, calls for designating a POW/MIA Empty Chair at all official meetings of The American Legion as a physical symbol of the thousands of American POW/MIAs still unaccounted for from All Wars and conflicts involving The United State of America.”

“The POW/MIA flag has been draped on the chair as a reminder for all of us to spare no effort to secure the release of any American prisoners from captivity, the repatriation of the remains of those who died bravely in defense of liberty, and a full accounting of those missing. Let us rededicate ourselves for this vital endeavor.”

**\*Resolution No 18: Amending POW/MIA Empty Chair Resolution** was adopted by the Legion’s National Executive Committee, May 9-10, 2001. The resolution changed the wording from “World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War” to

read as “All Wars and conflicts involving The United States of America.”

For complete text of **Res. 18** see appendix page XXX of this manual.

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## **POW/MIA Ceremony Sample 2**

### **Set up preparations**

- ✓ Small table covered with a white table cloth
- ✓ 1 – plate, fork, knife, spoon, and napkin set up on the table
- ✓ 1 – glass inverted
- ✓ 1 – chair placed at plate setting
- ✓ Vase with a single rose in it and a red ribbon tied onto the vase
- ✓ Slice of lemon on the plate and salt sprinkled onto the plate
- ✓ White candle in a holder, lit at the beginning of the ceremony
- ✓ POW/MIA flag draped over another chair in front of table
- ✓ Folded American Flag on the table

### **Ceremony**

“Those who have served, and those currently serving the uniformed services of the United States are ever mindful that the sweetness of enduring peace always has been tainted by the bitterness of personal sacrifice. We are compelled to never forget that while we enjoy our daily pleasures, there are others who have endured and may still be enduring the agonies of pain, deprivation and internment.”

“Before we begin our activities this evening, we will pause to remember our prisoners of war and missing in action.”

“We call your attention to this small table, which occupies a place of dignity and honor near the head table. It is set for one – symbolizing the fact that our armed forces personnel are missing from our ranks. They are referred to as POWs and MIAs.”

“We call them comrades. They are unable to be with their loved ones and families tonight, so we join together to pay our humble tribute to them, and to bear witness to their continued absence.”

“The table is small, symbolizing the frailty of one prisoner, alone against his or her oppressors.”

“The tablecloth is white, symbolic of the purity of intentions to respond to their country’s call to arms.”

“The single rose in the vase signifies the blood they may have shed in sacrifice to ensure the freedom of our beloved United States of America. This rose also reminds us of our missing comrades’ families and friends who keep the faith while awaiting their return.”

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“The red ribbon on the vase represents the red ribbons worn on the lapels of thousands who demand with unyielding determination a proper accounting of our comrades who are not among us tonight.”

—A slice of lemon on the plate reminds us of their bitter fate.

“The salt sprinkled on the plate reminds us of the countless fallen tears of families as they wait.”

“The glass is inverted, they cannot toast with us at this time.”

“The chair is empty – they are not here.”

“The candle is reminiscent of the light of hope, which lives in our hearts to illuminate their way home, away from their captors, to the open arms of a grateful nation.”

“The American flag reminds us that many of them may never return-and have paid the supreme sacrifice to insure our freedom.”

“Let us pray to the Supreme Commander that all of our comrades will soon be back within our ranks.”

“Let us remember – and never forget their sacrifice.”

“May God forever watch over them and protect them and their families.”

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## **POW/MIA Ceremony Sample 3**

### **Set up preparations**

- ✓ Small table covered with a white table cloth
- ✓ 1 – plate, fork, knife, spoon, and napkin set up on the table
- ✓ 1 – glass inverted
- ✓ 1 – chair placed at plate setting
- ✓ Vase with a single rose in it and a red ribbon tied onto the vase
- ✓ Slice of lemon on the plate and salt sprinkled onto the plate
- ✓ White candle in a holder, lit at the beginning of the ceremony
- ✓ POW/MIA flag draped over another chair in front of table
- ✓ Eagle statue on the table

### **Ceremony**

“Before we begin our service, we will honor the POWs and MIAs. Those who have served, and those who are now in the service to the United States, are ever mindful that the sweetness of enduring peace has always been tainted by the bitterness of personal sacrifice.”

“We must never forget that while we enjoy our daily pleasures, they have endured and may still be enduring the agonies of pain, deprivation and imprisonment. This table occupies a place of dignity and honor, it is small; which symbolizes the frailty of one prisoner against his or her oppressors. It is set for one, symbolizing the fact that some of our fellow service men and women are missing. They were our friends, our buddies, and our loved ones.”

“They are unable to be with us today and so we remember them and pay them honor.”

“The tablecloth is white...it symbolizes the purity of their intentions to respond to their country’s call to arms.”

“The single red rose displayed in a vase, reminds us of the families and friends of these honored men and women, who keep the faith while waiting for their return. The rose also reminds us of the blood they may have shed, while the thorns signify their suffering and sacrifice to ensure the freedom of our beloved country.”

“The red ribbon on the vase is reminiscent of the red ribbons worn on the lapels and breasts of thousands who demand a proper accounting of those missing.”

“A slice of lemon is on the bread plate...to remind us of their bitter fate.”

“There is salt sprinkled on the plate...symbolic of the family’s tears as they wait.”

“The eagle on the table is a reminder to our government that the American Legion is ever watchful, that they do everything in their power to secure the release of our friends.”

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## **Sample Memorial Service**

Welcome

\*Post Colors

\*Invocation

\*Pledge of Allegiance

Music

Reading of the Holy Scriptures

Memorial Prayer

Memorial Message

Music

Presentation of Memorial Wreath (Optional)

Lighting Candle of Remembrance

\*Taps

\*Hymn

\*Benediction

\*Retirement of the Colors

\*Indicates audience standing

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## Funeral

The American Legion service is nonsectarian. Therefore, it may be varied in accordance with the religious belief of the deceased Legionnaire. The wishes of the family of the deceased, and of the officiating clergy, should be respected.

*The casket is covered with an American flag when closed or as it leaves the chapel or home. In case the deceased served under an Allied flag, that flag shall also be displayed near the casket.*

### At Funeral, Chapel or Home

**Commander:** “Another Legionnaire has been called to the High Command, and has gone to the Commander of us all.”

**Chaplain:** “Let us pray. Eternal God, Supreme Commander of us all, Lord of the far-flung battle line, to whom the ranks of life report, we bow before you with reverent hearts and in sublime faith, knowing you lead us on in death as you have in life. For again you have ordered a Legionnaire to that realm in the West, beyond the twilight and the evening star, where beauty and valor and goodness dwell forever with the unnumbered multitude. Mindful of service nobly done, you have called (name of deceased) to everlasting rest. You have sealed his (her) lips. With the faded blossoms of springtime and the withered leaves of autumn, you have called our comrade to Eternal Peace, to the land of your silent mystery.

“Hear now the sorrows of those who mourn. Touch their tired hearts with healing. Protect them with your holy care. Keep clean and bright in memory the splendid flame that now has flickered out, and shelter us with your compassion.

“Lord of all life, who lives forever, again you have taught us the measure of our days. We are strangers with you and sojourners as our fathers were. Our days are as a shadow and there is none abiding. But you abide. Your years fail not. You never change. A thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. The grass withers, the flower fades, but your word endures forever. And therein is our help and hope.

“You heal the broken heart and bind up their wounds. Comfort your people. In their sorrow may there be no bitterness, no doubt of your eternal goodness. Give them to know you do not mock us with this stubborn hope of life eternal; that having created and cared for us you will not desert us to the dust; that you hold us with a love unfailing; that our dead are in your keeping; and that you are able to do far more for them than all we ask or think.

“Until for us also the day breaks and shadows flee, grant us so to live so our lives may honor the Legionnaires who have gone before us. Together we may come to the City which you have prepared for those who love you and keep your commandment. For your own name’s sake we pray. Amen.”

Short Eulogy (By one who knew our friend and Legionnaire well.)

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**Commander:** “This moment is sacred with the almost visible presence of the one who has gone before. We come to honor the memory of one who offered life and service for God and Country; one who has now enrolled in that great spirit army whose footfalls cause no sound. But in our memory, their souls go marching on. Proudly we remember their service in time of war. Because of them, our lives are free; because of them, our Nation lives; because of them the world is blessed. May the ceremonies of today deepen our reverence for our honored comrade and friend.

“Let us not enshroud their memory with thoughts of sorrow. Tears or words of sympathy cannot bring back the comfort of those loving hands or the music of voices stilled. The solemn pride of that service is theirs, and for the living to remember.

“Legionnaires and friends, let us here pledge ourselves anew to united service, to consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by a devotion to mutual helpfulness in the protection of those left behind.

“We realize how futile are mere words to express our deep and abiding sympathy in your loss. May you feel our comrade is at rest, and in endless peace. Generation after generation, all the shadowy peoples of the past have lived as we live, perplexed and mystified by death. They have gone into the Great Beyond with hearts filled with wistful longing, as all must go.

“Surely there is an afterlife for all who have been loyal and true, a life to which light and peace shall come, where the burden shall be lifted and the heartache shall cease, where the love, the hope and the fulfillment that escape us here shall be given to us, to be ours forever.”

*(Here the Chaplain offers a prayer in accordance with the faith of the deceased.)*

**Chaplain:** (Protestant Prayer)

“O God, who heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds; look in tender pity and compassion upon thy servants whose joy has been turned into mourning. Leave them not comfortless, but grant that they may be drawn closer to thee and to one another by their common sorrow. Fill their souls with the light and comfort of thy presence. Grant unto them such a vision of that life wherein all mysteries shall be revealed, and all tears be wiped away, that they may be able to endure. So dwell with them and be their God, until the day break and the shadows flee away; through Jesus Christ our Lord Amen.”

**Chaplain:** (Jewish Prayer)

“O Lord, who art full of compassion, who dwellest on high-God of forgiveness, who are merciful, slow to anger and abounding in loving kindness-grant pardon of transgressions, nearness of salvation, and perfect rest beneath the shadow of thy divine presence, in the exalted places among the holy and pure, who shine as the brightness of the firmament, to (name of deceased Legionnaire) who hath gone to his (her) eternal home. We beseech thee, O Lord of compassion, remember unto him (her) for good all the meritorious and pious deeds which he (she) wrought while on earth. Open unto him (her) the gates of righteousness and light, the gates of pity and grace. O shelter him (her) forever-more under the cover of thy wings; and let his (her) soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life. The Lord is his (her) inheritance; may he (she) rest in peace. And let us say, Amen.”

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### **Chaplain: (Catholic Prayer)**

“Father, we entrust our brother (sister) to your mercy. You loved him (her) greatly in this life; now that he (she) is freed from all its cares, him (her) happiness and peace forever.

“The old order has passed away; welcome him (her) now into paradise where there will be no more sorrow, no more weeping or pain, but only peace and joy with Jesus, your Son, and the Holy Spirit forever and ever.

“Eternal rest grant unto him (her), O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him (her). May his (her) soul and all of the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen”

*When there is a service at the chapel or home and if the casket is open, the Commander or Chaplain may at the conclusion of the service place a poppy in the casket and say, “The Memorial Poppy is a national symbol of the flowers in Flanders Field that embodies the sacrifices of men and women who served and died for their country in all wars. We now leave this poppy with you in your honor, and as an eternal reminder of the binding comradeship we feel for you. He then salutes and says, Farewell, to our friend, Legionnaire and comrade.”*

*If the casket is sealed and draped with the American Flag, do not use the poppy, as nothing is placed on top of an American Flag, but salute and say, “Farewell, my fellow Legionnaire.”*

All Legionnaires present at the funeral service shall pass the casket and salute the deceased Legionnaire. It is not necessary to place another poppy in the casket. After the salute, the Legionnaires present shall leave the funeral chapel in single file and with dignity.

### **Funeral Escort**

*The escort is formed outside the church, chapel, or residence. Upon appearance of the casket, the **Commander commands:** “Present ...Arms.”*

*After the casket is placed in the hearse, the **Commander commands:** “Order...Arms.”*

### **Procedure at Cemetery**

*The column having arrived opposite the grave, the Firing Squad and American Legion members are formed in line facing the grave. The Chaplain or clergy stands at the head of the grave.*

- *The casket is then carried along the front of the line to the grave.*
- *The Firing Squad presents arms.*
- *The casket having been placed over the grave, arms are brought to order.*
- *The **Commander next commands:** “Parade. Rest.”*
- *The Officer in charge of Firing Squad brings his detachment to parade rest. On executing parade rest, they all incline the head.*

---

### **At Graveside**

If no previous service has been held, the service for church, chapel or home should be read at the grave, prior to the following committal.

**Chaplain:** “Man, who is born of woman, is of few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth as a flower and is cut down. He fleeth also as a shadow and continueth not.

“Forasmuch as God hath taken out of the world the soul of our departed comrade, we therefore commit his (her) body to the ground to sleep and his (her) soul to endless peace to rest. The dust returneth to earth as it was, and the spirit returneth unto God who gave it.”

*Benediction (if desired).*

At the conclusion of the Chaplain’s service, two pallbearers remove Flag from casket, fold it in the traditional manner (see “Flag and Flag Etiquette”), and place in on the arm of Chaplain, who will give Flag to the next of kin.

**Commander:** “Salute our departed comrade.”

*Officer in charge of Firing Squad gives order according to the Infantry Drill Regulation in force at the time.*

*Squad fires three rounds of blank cartridges, the muzzles of the pieces being elevated.*

**Bugler:** *Taps. (With two bugle echoes from different positions of the cemetery, if possible.)*

*The escort is formed into column, marched in quick time to the point where it assembled, and dismissed.*

(Wherever the term “Commander” is used in connection with funeral escort, procedure at cemetery and graveside, it refers to the Commander of the Firing Squad. The Post Commander shall be at the head of The American Legion delegation, except where the funeral service is held at the grave. Then the Post Commander shall be on the left of the Chaplain and at the head of the grave.)

### **American Legion Military Funeral Escorts**

An American Legion Military Funeral in its entirety requires 21 Legionnaires in uniform, as follows:

- Chaplain
- Bugler
- Color Bearers of Firing Squad (2)
- Color Guards (2)
- Commander
- Firing Squad (8)
- Pallbearers (6)

---

The Commander of the Firing Squad is in charge of all details and movements. The Firing Squad should be composed of members who are familiar with handling the rifle. The Commander should get the squad together before the service and simulate volley firing. The entire escort should be arranged according to height and uniform worn.

In some instances the family calls upon the Post to take charge of the church or home services as well as the services at the grave. As a general rule, however, the church has charge of the church or home services, after which the Post Chaplain conducts the final rites. It is highly desirable the Post conducting the funeral discusses beforehand with the Clergy and the funeral director the exact procedure to be followed.

For the guidance of those concerned, the following is suggested:

#### **Post Service in Place of Worship, Chapel or Home**

The entire escort should be inside. All uncover except those bearing arms or colors. Pallbearers and Firing Squad should sit as separate groups.

#### **Post Services Following Those at the Place of Worship, Chapel or Home**

The Pallbearers are covered, even when carrying the casket. When casket comes into view, the Commander of Firing Squad gives the command: "1. Escort. 2. Attention," followed by "1. Present. 2. Arms."

The Commander salutes.

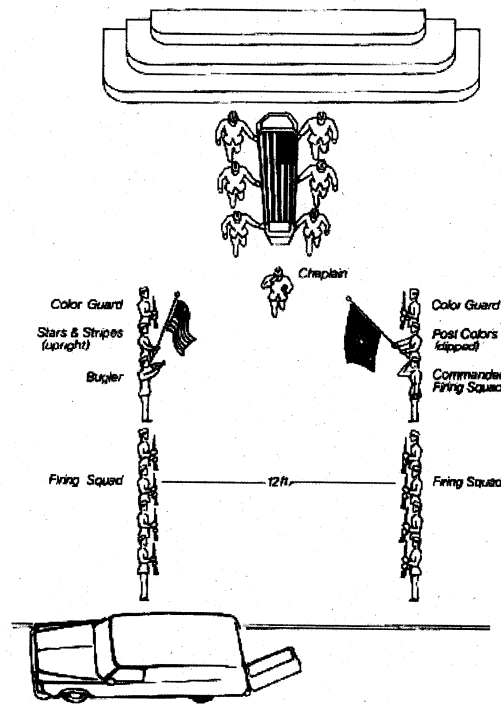
As the Chaplain leads the body through escort, the Commander holds the right hand salute (Chaplain salutes Flag only).

Post banner is dipped as casket passes.

The Firing Squad remains at "Present Arms" until casket is in hearse and doors closed; then the **Commander** gives "1. Order. 2. Arms."

---

The Units should be arranged at the building exit before the body comes out of the place of worship or home in the following order:



The escorts enter cars as quickly as possible.

The Firing Squad, Color Bearers, Guards and Commander should go ahead of the procession and get their places.

The Chaplain, Bugler and Pallbearers should go to the cemetery ahead of the funeral procession.

The Firing Squad can be given necessary drill at grave before the hearse arrives.

No definite arrangement at the grave is advisable because the surroundings at each grave differ. The following plan, changed when necessary, is satisfactory.

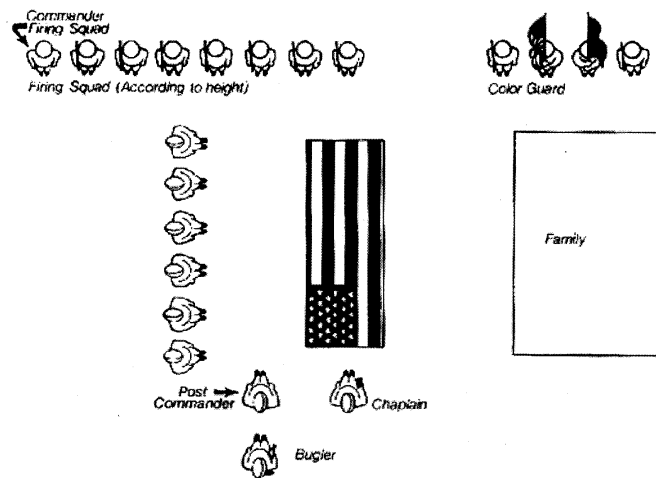
The Pallbearers at cemetery await the opening of the hearse.

The Chaplain leads the casket from the hearse to grave.

Upon sight of casket, the **Commander** gives "Present. Arms." And holds it until the body is set over grave. **Then** "Order. Arms."

---

When the casket is in position, the following general plan is satisfactory:



As the Chaplain begins the grave services, the Commander brings Firing Squad and Pallbearers to "Parade, Rest," and holds it until Chaplain's services are complete; then "1. Escort. 2. Attention."

At the conclusion of the Chaplain's service, two Pallbearers remove the Flag from the casket, fold it in the traditional manner and place it on the arm of Chaplain, who will give the Flag to nearest kin following the services.

**Chaplain:** "The Government of the United States presents to you, through The American Legion, the Flag under which our comrade served."

Other appropriate remarks can be made by Chaplain.

As soon as Flag is presented, the Firing Squad fires three volleys:

At the **Commander's order**. "Ready," bring the rifle so that the muzzle of rifles level with point of chin. The right foot should be placed to the rear about 10 inches. The right hand should be on small of stock and left hand at rear of sight.

At command, "Load" (rifles should be loaded, none in chamber before body is taken from hearse) work bolt and put cartridge in chamber.

Remain at position of "Ready" until order "Aim" is given.

An aiming point should be designated so elevation of rifles is uniform.

The command of execution is "Fire."

---

After firing, the first and second volleys come to position of “Ready” and wait for command, “1. Ready. 2. Aim. 3. Fire.”

Upon completion of third volley, come to “Present Arms” without command.

If rifle jams, don’t attempt to fix it; simulate firing.

The bugler now takes position at head of grave and blows Taps.

Echo Taps, if possible, are very impressive.

The Commander of Firing Squad gives “Order Arms.”

This concludes the services and the Commander gives “1. Right or Left Face. 2. At Trail. 3. Forward. 4. March,” followed by the Colors and then by Pallbearers.

---

## Traditional Method of Folding the United States Flag

As an Army and Navy custom, the flag is lowered daily at the last note of retreat. Special care should be taken that no part of the flag touches the ground. The Flag is then carefully folded into the shape of a tri-cornered hat, emblematic of the hats worn by colonial soldiers during the war for Independence. In the folding, the red and white stripes are finally wrapped into the blue, as the light of day vanishes into the darkness of night. This custom of special folding is reserved for the United States Flag alone.

### How to fold the Flag

#### Step 1



To properly fold the Flag, begin by holding it waist-high with another person so that its surface is parallel to the ground.



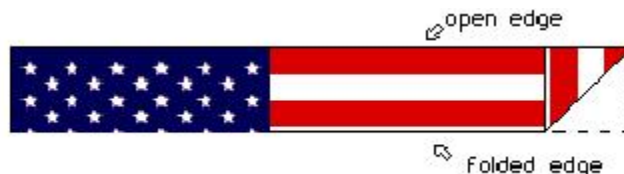
#### Step 2

Fold the lower half of the stripe section lengthwise over the field of stars, holding the bottom and top edges securely.



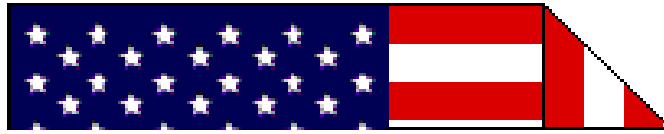
#### Step 3

Fold the flag again lengthwise with the blue field on the outside.



#### Step 4

Make a triangular fold by bringing the striped corner of the folded edge to meet the open (top) edge of the flag.



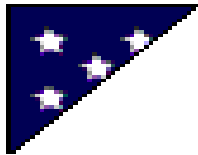
**Step 5**

Turn the outer (end) point inward, parallel to the open edge, to form a second triangle.



**Step 6**

The triangular folding is continued until the entire length of the flag is folded in this manner.



**Step 7**

When the flag is completely folded, only a triangular blue field of stars should be visible.

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## **Flag Folding Ceremony**

### **Meaning of the Flag Folding Ceremony**

The flag folding ceremony represents the same religious principles on which our great country was originally founded.

The portion of the flag denoting honor is the canton of blue containing the stars representing states our veterans served in uniform. The canton field of blue dresses from left to right and is inverted only when draped as a pall on the casket of a veteran who has served our country honorably in uniform.

In the Armed Forces of the United States, at the ceremony of retreat, the flag is lowered, folded in a triangle fold and kept under watch throughout the night as a tribute to our nation's honored dead. The next morning it is brought out and, at the ceremony of reveille, run aloft as a symbol of our belief in the resurrection of the body.

- The first fold of our flag is a symbol of life.
- The second fold is a symbol of our belief in the eternal life.
- The third fold is made in honor and remembrance of the veteran departing our ranks and who gave a portion of life for the defense of our country to attain peace throughout the world.
- The fourth fold represents our weaker nature; for as American citizens trusting in God, it is to Him we turn in times of peace as well as in times of war for His divine guidance.
- The fifth fold is a tribute to our country, for in the words of Stephen Decatur, "Our country, in dealing with other countries, may she always be right, but it is still our country, right or wrong."
- The sixth fold is for where our hearts lie. It is with our heart that we pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stand, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.
- The seventh fold is a tribute to our Armed Forces, for it is through the Armed Forces that we protect our country and our flag against all enemies, whether they be found within or without the boundaries of our republic.
- The eighth fold is a tribute to the one who entered into the valley of the shadow of death, that we might see the light of day, and to honor our mother, for whom it flies on Mother's Day.
- The ninth fold is a tribute to womanhood, for it has been through their faith, love, loyalty and devotion that the character of the men and women who have made this country great have been molded.
- The tenth fold is a tribute to father, for he, too, has given his sons and daughters for the defense of our country since he or she was first born.

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- The eleventh fold, in the eyes of Hebrew citizens, represents the lower portion of the seal of King David and King Solomon and glorifies, in their eyes, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
  - The twelfth fold, in the eyes of a Christian citizen, represents an emblem of eternity and glorifies, in their eyes, God the Father, the Son and Holy Ghost.

When the flag is completely folded, the stars are uppermost, reminding us of our national motto, “In God We Trust.”

After the flag is completely folded and tucked in, it takes on the appearance of a cocked hat, ever reminding us of the soldiers who served under General George Washington and the sailors and marines who served under Captain John Paul Jones who were followed by their comrades and shipmates in the Armed Forces of the United States, preserving for us the rights, privileges, and freedoms we enjoy today.

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## Military Funeral Honors for Veterans

On October 5, 1999, President Clinton signed into law the National Defense Authorization Act, Public Law 105-261. Section 578 of the Act reflects the extensive deliberation on Military Funeral Honors conducted between the Department of Defense and Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) to include the American Legion.

Some of the key features of the law are:

- The law mandates military participation in a basic Military Funeral Honors Ceremony consisting of the folding and presentation of the Flag and the playing of “Taps” for every eligible veteran **upon request**.
- Funeral directors will be the focal point for requesting military participation in rendering funeral honors.
- Military personnel to perform this ceremony shall consist of two or more Uniformed members of the Armed Forces, with at least one member from the Service in which the deceased veteran served.
- Members of veterans service organizations (VSO) are encouraged to participate in Military Funeral Honors and to augment military funeral details when requested. The law allows reimbursement of expenses for members of VSOs, however, a final decision on reimbursement policy will be forthcoming. The Military Services have been requested to conduct training for those VSO elements which will be participating in Military Funeral Honors.
- Members of the National Guard and Reserves are also encouraged to participate in military honor and will receive an allowance of \$150/day as well as retirement points.

Due to a limited number of buglers in the Military Services, a recorded version of “Taps” is often used. To ensure superior quality of playback, the Department of Defense (DoD) has recorded the playing of “Taps” at Arlington National Cemetery on compact discs to American Legion departments, to funeral directors, and to participating military units.

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## **Funeral Honors Ceremony**

*“Honoring Those Who Serve”*

### **The American Legion assisting as an “Authorized Provider”**

In the *National Defense Authorization Act* for fiscal year 2000, the United States Congress legislated that, upon request of the next of kin, all eligible veterans **MUST** receive Military Funeral Honors when they pass on.

At a minimum, the funeral honors will consist of a two-person uniformed military detail, with at least one member representing the parent service of the deceased.

The legislation also encourages veterans service organizations, and others, to augment the honors detail as an authorized provider with pallbearers, firing party, bugler and color guard.

**The American Legion** has performed thousands of burial ceremonies annually for the families of veterans throughout their history; this will not change. Over the years the organization has adopted certain ways and means that may differ from other groups. This does not mean they are wrong or improper, just different.

Whenever The American Legion is assisting the United States Government they should conform to the DOD’s methods of conduct. In working together, we honor, in the highest traditions of American military service, those who have gone before. In doing so, all the requirements for a reverent, respectful, and dignified ceremony are met.

The individual military services will provide training to an authorized provider assisting with the ceremony to include positioning, timing, safety, and proper funeral honors protocol.

The following represents DOD guidance on the rendering of Military Funeral Honors. By law, the Military Funeral Honors detail will consist of at least two uniformed members of the military, with the detail leader from the parent service of the deceased. When requested by the next of kin, the ceremonial paying of respect and gratitude to those who have faithfully defended our Nation **MUST** include the following:

- ❖ **The sounding of “Taps” and ceremonial folding and presentation of the American flag.**  
(The flag is always presented by the detail leader.)

The detail leader will coordinate all arrangements with the funeral director, other member(s) of the military honors detail, and with Authorized Providers, such as The American Legion. He or she will ensure the funeral director explains military honors to the family, and that they understand the honors to be performed. It is especially important the family know about the firing of three volleys, if a firing party is present. Additional Military Funeral Honors elements should be in accordance with the family’s wishes.

Once the detail leader has completed initial coordination, his or her final pre-interment responsibility is to train and rehearse the detail.

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It is important for all involved to remember the detail leader bears the responsibility for all aspects of the Military Funeral Honors Ceremony, whether active duty service members or Authorized Providers perform those elements of the honors.

### **Positioning/Timing Protocol**

1. The order of the ceremony is the sounding of “Taps,” the folding of the flag, and then the presentation of the flag to the family. If there is a firing party, the volleys are fired before the sounding of “Taps.” The detail leader is responsible for ensuring each step in the ceremony is executed properly, from the arrival of the funeral cortege to its departure.
2. The bugler and color guard should be placed at the gravesite so they are in view of the family, approximately 30-40 yards from the grave. The firing party should also be in view of the family, but 45-75 yards from the grave, positioned to fire over the grave.
3. The firing party may include three to eight rifle-bearers, reflecting the American military custom of firing “three volleys of musketry” over the graves of fallen comrades.
4. The Military Honors detail should be positioned near where the hearse will stop. After the funeral procession has arrived, the funeral director will open the rear of the hearse and the pallbearers should move into position so they can move easily to the back of the hearse when needed.
5. When the family is ready to proceed, the funeral director will signal the pallbearers to withdraw the casket from the hearse and carry it to the grave. The bugler, firing party and color guard are already in their gravesite positions.
6. All detail participants (except for the pallbearers) will come to “Attention” and “Present Arms” as the casket is carried to the grave. All detail participants will “Order arms” after the casket has been placed on the lowering device. Pallbearers may be instructed to hold the flag over the casket, or move off as a group and stand in formation for the service.
7. During the committal or religious service, all the detail participants may go to “Parade Rest.”
8. When the committal or religious service is completed, the service representative and assistant will assume the clergy representative’s position at the head of the grave and all detail participants will come to the position of “Attention.” Then, the funeral director will ask the mourners to stand for the rendering of honors.
9. Once the mourners have risen, the detail leader and all elements will execute “Present Arms,” volleys will be fired, and “Taps” sounded. Upon completion of “Taps,” all will “Order Arms” and the funeral director will request the mourners to be seated.
10. Next the flag is folded. The two person military detail, the pallbearers, or a combination of the two can do this. Once the flag is folded, it MUST end up in the hands of the detail assistant, who will pass it to the detail leader.

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11. The detail leader will present the flag to the next of kin. (The wording accompanying the presentation should be in accordance with each Military Service's tradition of expressing the thanks of a grateful Nation.)

12. Following the flag presentation, the detail leader will offer condolences to the remainder of the immediate family and other mourners seated in the front row. It is appropriate and encouraged for a representative of the Authorized Provider to offer condolences after the detail leader.

13. Once condolences have been offered, the detail leader and assistant will return to the cortege arrival point and await the departure of the cortege. The bugler, firing party and color guard are released when the detail leader departs the gravesite. They may choose to remain in place until the family departs, or can return quietly to their own vehicles.

It is the sacred obligation of all Americans to honor our deceased veterans by performing these time-honored duties in the best tradition of the decedent's Service. America's veterans like The American Legion are helping to fulfill that obligation by supplementing the effort of the Military Services.

Authorized Providers may receive reimbursement for certain expenses incurred in the rendering of Military funeral Honors. The assigned military unit can assist in obtaining the reimbursement. Upon completion of the ceremony, the detail leader MUST ensure the required information on the *Military Funeral Honors Data Collection Form* is completed and submitted to the tasked organization.

As an authorized provider of Military Funeral Honors, The American Legion is the Nation's representative for this most hallowed event. The Legion's dignified participation reflects the professionalism of our own service to the Nation, and leaves a lasting impression on everyone present – a source of pride and support for the veteran's family, the friends and a grateful nation. The above are the guidelines to follow if The American Legion is assisting as an Authorized Provider.

If The American Legion is conducting the ceremony without the presence of a military detail, established Legion protocol and tradition may be followed in rendering honors to a veteran who served in the Armed Forces of the United States of America.

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**(Sample Memorial Resolution Male)**

**The American Legion  
Department of \_\_\_\_\_**

Whereas, it has pleased Almighty God, the Great Commander, to summon to his immortal Legions our beloved Comrade, \_\_\_\_\_  
Member of \_\_\_\_\_ Post No. \_\_\_\_\_ Department of \_\_\_\_\_,  
and

Whereas, We humbly bow to the will of Divine Providence, while ever cherishing in our hearts the memory of his distinguished service to our country and his outstanding contributions to American Legion comradeship, now therefore be it

Resolved, That The American Legion, Department of \_\_\_\_\_, does mourn the passing of our Comrade, and we commend to all men, his works, and to God his spirit, and be it further

Resolved, That in token of our common grief, a copy of this resolution be presented to his family this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_ 20\_\_.

Attest:

Department Commander

Department Adjutant

Post Commander

Post Adjutant

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**(Sample Memorial Resolution Female)**

**The American Legion**  
**Department of \_\_\_\_\_**

Whereas, It has pleased Almighty God, the Great Commander, to summon to his immortal  
Legions our beloved Comrade, \_\_\_\_\_  
Member of \_\_\_\_\_ Post No. \_\_\_\_\_ Department of \_\_\_\_\_, and

Whereas, We humbly bow to the will of Divine Providence, while ever cherishing in our hearts  
the memory of her distinguished service to our country and her outstanding contributions to  
American Legion comradeship, now therefore be it

Resolved, That The American Legion, Department of \_\_\_\_\_, does mourn the passing of our  
Comrade, and we commend to all people, her works, and to God her spirit, and be it further

Resolved, That in token of our common grief, a copy of this resolution be presented to her family  
this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_ 20\_\_.

Attest:

Department Commander

Department Adjutant

Post Commander

Post Adjutant

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## How to Write a Resolution

Because the resolutions adopted by your membership represent a formal expression of the official opinion or will of the post, extreme care should be devoted to both their preparation and thought content. The following guidelines and suggestions relate primarily to the form your post's resolutions should take, rather than their content. However, when considering resolutions, keep in mind that any proposal transmitted beyond your post and within the organization of the Legion must be “germane” - that is, closely related to the purpose for which The American Legion exists.

Resolutions requiring county, district or department consideration must be prepared and forwarded in accordance with their respective regulations and by-laws. A well-written resolution stands a better chance of getting favorable consideration at your county, district, or department convention than a resolution which is vaguely worded and carelessly formulated.

From the standpoint of the policies and practices of The American Legion as a whole, resolutions are all-important. The National Organization cannot act on a given problem in the absence of a controlling resolution; and, conversely, it must act on a matter when mandated to do so by a resolution which has been properly adopted by the National Convention or National Executive Committee. If your post seeks to be a leader in the policies and practices of The American Legion, it can do so only through the resolution method.

### Post Procedures May Vary

In some posts, the member who moves the adoption of a resolution must present it in writing at the time the motion is offered. Other posts follow the practice of assigning one member, or special committee, the task of drafting or editing those resolutions to be sent forward for convention consideration. However, it remains the responsibility of the Post Commander to make sure each resolution truly reflects the sense of the action taken by the post--and is presented in the best possible form.

Except for certain details (noted in the discussion of resolving clauses below) the National Organization has not established an official style guide for the preparation of American Legion resolutions. However, the National Executive Committee has expressed (Res. No. 20 and 21, May 1960) certain general considerations are applicable to all resolutions being forwarded for action by the National Organization as follows:

1. A resolution should contain “supporting documents,” and its intent should be clearly defined
2. A resolution should be free of errors of fact and law.
3. A resolution should have material relevance to the purposes and programs of The American Legion. (On the latter point, the NEC specifically cautions Legion Posts to beware of becoming a channel through which non-legion organizations seek to achieve their goals.)

A resolution should deal with only one subject. Those which attempt to treat more than one subject are unwieldy to process at conventions, especially if they involve matters which do not

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fall within the jurisdiction of a single committee of the convention. They are generally rejected or amended to delete reference to more than one subject.

Resolutions have two major parts, a preamble and a resolving section. Each consists of one or more clauses (sometimes called paragraphs) and the whole is read in its entirety, beginning with the preamble, as one continuous, complex sentence. The preamble sets forth the reasons for the resolution; the resolving section sets forth the intent of the resolution.

### **Prepare Preamble Last**

Although it precedes the resolving section in appearance, the preamble of a resolution should be prepared after the resolving section has been put into final form. Once the intent of the resolution has been clearly stated, it is much easier to decide what statements need to be in the preamble to make clear the reasons for the resolution. Also, during committee or floor debate, a preamble is always amended last because changes in the resolution may require changes in the preamble.

The resolving section of a resolution begins with the word “RESOLVED,” usually printed in capital letters and followed by a comma. Between this opening word and the statement of the resolution's intent there should be inserted the following information: (1) identification of resolving authority; (2) the circumstance and place of the action; (3) the date of the action. The first word after this information would be “That” with a capital “T.”

Example:

“RESOLVED, by Post No. ...., The American Legion, Department of....., in regular (or special) meeting assembled in ..... (Place and Date) ....., That ...”

This clause, referred to as the “resolving clause” (similar to the “enacting clause” of a law), should be uniform for every resolution. For National Convention and National Executive Committee resolutions, the resolving clauses have been standardized as follows:

“RESOLVED, by The American Legion in National Convention assembled in ..... (City and State) ....., ..... (Date) ....., That ...”

The word “That” immediately following the resolving clause introduces the clause which is the object of the verb “RESOLVED.” It aids the reader to find the point at which the meat of the resolution begins; it aids the drafter of the resolution to launch a strong and unmistakable statement of intent.

Examples:

“RESOLVED, ... That The American Legion shall sponsor and support legislation to ...”

“RESOLVED, ... That The American Legion is opposed to repeal or weakening of ...”

Although each resolution should deal with only one subject, it is often necessary or desirable to attach additional clauses (or paragraphs) to a resolution's resolving section in order to cover matters that are closely related to the main intent. This device is especially useful for spelling out

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the details of how and by whom the intent of the resolution is to be carried out or accomplished.

Example:

“RESOLVED, by (etc.) ..., That (etc.) ..., and be it further

“RESOLVED, That (etc.) ..., and be it finally (add further RESOLVED paragraphs as required)

“RESOLVED, That (etc.).. .”

As shown here, the identifying information is stated only once, in the first paragraph of the resolving section of a resolution. and is not repeated in subsequent paragraphs. A period is used only once--at the close of the last paragraph of the resolving section.

### **Construction of Resolution Preamble**

The preamble of a resolution is made up of one or more clauses or paragraphs), each of which begins with “WHEREAS.” Two or more of these clauses are joined together by a semicolon followed by “and.”

Example:

“WHEREAS, The American Legion is an organization of war veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the community, state and nation; and

“WHEREAS, This service is performed through The American Legion's basic programs; and (etc.)”

Each clause in the preamble should contain a statement of fact which is logically related to the intent of the resolution and explains and justifies the need for the resolution. Note that each clause would stand alone as a complete sentence if the “WHEREAS” were removed and a period were used in place of the semicolon at the end.

The final clause of the preamble is joined to the resolving section of the resolution by a semicolon (or colon), followed usually by the phrase “now, therefore, be it....” (acceptable variations in common usage are “therefore be it”; or simply “be it”).

Example:

“WHEREAS, ..... (etc.) .....; and

“WHEREAS, ..... (etc.) .....; and “WHEREAS, ..... (etc.) .....; now, therefore, be it

“RESOLVED, by ..... (etc.) ....., That ..... (etc.) .....

(Note: The “Whereas” may be set out in capital letters, italics, underscored, etc., depending preference. When capitalized, it is usually followed by a comma, and then the first letter of the following word is capitalized.)

There is no formula for deciding how many “WHEREAS” clauses a resolution should have. In general, the fewer the better, provided the reason or reasons for the resolution are adequately stated. Most of the good reasons for a resolution will have been stated during the debate for its adoption. Use them. It is not necessary, however, to refer in the preamble to every fact or circumstance that has a bearing on the intent of a resolution.

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Study the resolving section and get the exact purpose of the resolution firmly in mind. Then start writing down statements of fact which relate to this purpose. Organize them into a logical sequence (throwing out the weak or unnecessary ones), and then put a “WHEREAS,” in front of each, a semicolon at the end of each, plus the appropriate connecting word (“and”) or words (“now, therefore, be it”) for joining them to each other and the resolving section. Do not use period in the preamble.

Resolutions are important business to The American Legion. Write them with thought and care.

SOURCE: *American Legion Post Officer’s Guide and Manual of Ceremonies*

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## **Resolution No. 18: Amending POW/MIA Empty Chair Resolution**

WHEREAS, The American Legion's POW/MIA Ceremony, adopted at the 67th National Convention in 1985, included all Wars of this century at that time; and

WHEREAS, The United States of America has been involved in further military action since that time; and

WHEREAS, The continued conflicts in which the United States are involved makes it likely that we may still have missing and unaccounted people in the future; and

WHEREAS, The former military and present military personnel that are eligible to join The American Legion would like to see their era of military service be included in this ceremony; and  
WHEREAS, All POW/MIAs of every period of our history both past, present and future should be remembered in this ceremony; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED, By The National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, May 9-10, 2001, That the wording of the first sentence which state "World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War", be changed so that it reads, "All Wars and conflicts involving The United States of America."**

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## The History of Memorial Day

Memorial Day was originally known as Decoration Day because it was a time set aside to honor the nation's Civil War dead by decorating their graves. It was first widely observed on May 30, 1868, to commemorate the sacrifices of Civil War soldiers, by proclamation of General John A. Logan of the Grand Army of the Republic, an organization of former sailors and soldiers.

On May 5, 1868, Logan declared in General Order No. 11 that:

*The 30th of May, 1868, is designated for the purpose of strewing with flowers, or other-wise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village, and hamlet churchyard in the land. In this observance no form of ceremony is prescribed, but posts and comrades will in their own way arrange such fitting services and testimonials of respect as circumstances may permit.*

During the first celebration of Decoration Day, General James Garfield made a speech at Arlington National Cemetery, after which 5,000 participants helped to decorate the graves of the more than 20,000 Union and Confederate soldiers buried in the cemetery.

This 1868 celebration was inspired by local observances of the day in several towns throughout America that had taken place in the three years since the Civil War. In fact, several Northern and Southern cities claim to be the birthplace of Memorial Day, including Columbus, Mississippi; Macon, Georgia; Richmond, Virginia; Boalsburg, Pennsylvania; and Carbondale, Illinois.

In 1966, the federal government, under the direction of President Lyndon Johnson, declared Waterloo, New York, the official birthplace of Memorial Day. They chose Waterloo, which had first celebrated the day on May 5, 1866, because the town had made Memorial Day an annual, community-wide event during which businesses closed and residents decorated the graves of soldiers with flowers and flags.

By the late 1800's, many communities across the country had begun to celebrate Memorial Day and, after World War I, observances also began to honor those who had died in all of America's wars. In 1971, Congress declared Memorial Day a national holiday to be celebrated the last Monday in May.

Today, Memorial Day is celebrated at Arlington National Cemetery with a ceremony in which a small American flag is placed on each grave. Also, it is customary for the President or Vice-President to give a speech honoring the contributions of the dead and lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. About 5,000 people attend the ceremony annually.

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Several Southern states continue to set aside a special day for honoring the Confederate dead, which is usually called Confederate Memorial Day:

- Mississippi: Last Monday in April
- Alabama: Fourth Monday in April
- Georgia: April 26
- North Carolina: May 10
- South Carolina: May 10
- Tennessee (Confederate Decoration Day): June 3
- Texas (Confederate Heroes Day): January 19
- Virginia: Last Monday in May

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## Introduction

“A Look at Islam” has been prepared in response to requests from chaplains wishing additional information about Islam. Since the attacks of September 11, 2001 and our consequent presence in the Middle East, Legionnaires often times have questions regarding Islam and many chaplains are at a loss in knowing how to answer these questions. It is the desire that this small work might answer several of the most frequently asked questions and help make it possible for chaplains to better explain Islam. The American Legion would like to thank Rev. Norris Keirn (IN), National Chaplain 2002-2003 and Department Chaplain for his efforts in composing this section.



## A Look at Islam

According to USA TODAY magazine (Jan.26, 2011), there are 1.6 billion Muslims around the world. The highest concentration of Muslims is in Indonesia followed by Africa and Asia. Islam is predominantly an ethnic religion, however this is rapidly changing in the U.S. and Europe. In fact, Islam is reported to be the fastest growing non-Christian religion in the United States. The Islamic population of the U.S. surpassed its Jewish population in 1995.

### History of Islam

The founder of Islam, bin Abdallah, was born (570 A.C.E.) and was poor by an uncle. At the twenty-five, he married a woman named Khadija fifteen

years his senior. Her wealth funded his early campaigns. At the age of forty, after meditation in a cave in Mecca, Muhammad received a vision of God or the angel Gabriel (depending on the Hadith). He was directed to proclaim the absolute unity of God to denounce idolatry.

The Crescent is a common religious symbol earlier associated with moon-worship. It was taken over by Muslims after they had conquered Byzantium in 1453 A.D. Since then it has been accepted as a symbol of Islam, especially in Arab countries. (*Ethics of World Religions by Hunt & Crotty Greenhaven: Minneapolis 1978.*) For Muslims it represents the beginning of Ramadan when Venus aligns with the crescent moon in November beginning the month of daylight fasting.

Muhammad orphaned at raised in age of rich widow years his

Though the Quran limits a Muslim to five wives, Muhammad was exempt and had thirteen wives. The youngest was nine years old at the time of the marriage.

One Hadith tells how Muhammad was taken into heaven on a winged animal, half donkey, half mule. He arrived at a temple and found Abraham, Moses, and Jesus among the prophets. He held that Allah was the one and only true God and had revealed himself to Abraham, the patriarchs of Judaism, the prophets of Israel, and Jesus. However, he held that Judaism and Christianity had strayed from the Law of God.

In another Hadith a phantom visited the prophet and gave him the summons to prayer:

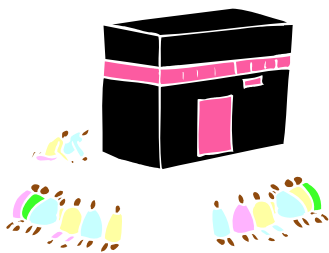
**Allahu Akbar! (God is most great) Allahu Akbar! I bear witness that there is no god but Allah! I bear witness that Muhammad is an Apostle of Allah! Come to prayer! Come to**

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**Prayer! Come to salvation! Come to Salvation! Allahu Akbar! Allahu Akbar! There is no god but Allah!**

Islam, as a religious practice, began during the seventh century A.C.E. in western Saudi Arabia. The word Islam means submission and marks the basic concept of the religion. It emerged from a well developed society of states ruled by priest/kings who were religio-political leaders. They had built an intricate system of irrigation, luxurious castles and temples of worship. Their religion included polytheism (*plurality of gods*). Of key importance were a moon god, a sun goddess and another god represented by the planet Venus.

The tribes of the northern Sinai Peninsula believed in many gods. But by the seventh century, Al'ilah (later shortened to Allah) was held as the most important. It was believed that Allah lived in the sky and provided rain and fertility. Trade became channeled through Mecca and with it the tribes brought the worship of their deities. Mecca prospered greatly. The city was seized in the fifth century by a tribe called the Quraph. It became their religious center. A large black stone shrine called the Ka'ba (*cube*) was honored as their religious center. Over three hundred tribal idols were worshiped on the Kaba (*Global Harvest Vol. 3 #1 Mar. 2002.*) The Quraph were unsympathetic to their kinsman Muhammad.



In 622 A.C.E., men from Yathril in Saudi Arabia were inspired by Muhammad's teachings. Muhammad became their religio-political leader in Mecca. Their trip to Mecca is known as the Haji (*emigration*). This group was called the Umma or Community of Islam.

A victorious raid on a Meccan caravan was led by Muhammad in 624 A.C.E. at Badr and was defeated later in an attempt at Uhad, both in Saudi Arabia. From this he taught submission to Allah stating in Surah 3, "We alternate vicissitudes among mankind so that Allah may know the true believers and choose martyrs from among you so that he may test the faithful and annihilate the infidels... ..no one dies unless Allah permits. The term of every life is fixed." Mecca was forced to surrender to Muhammad in 630 A.C.E. Tribal loyalty was replaced with absolute submission to Allah. Thus, Muhammad's tribal deity was the only remaining idol to be worshipped at the Kaba.

### Sources for Authority

The traditional Muslim holds four sources for authority. First and foremost is the **Quran** (*reading or recitation*). It is held that this book was written by Muhammad through revelation. It is revered as the book of Allah himself. It is believed to be without error and cannot be questioned. Gabriel gave the contents to Muhammad from heavenly tablets. Christianity holds that the "the Word became flesh" but Islam holds that "the Word became Book". The worst sin is to "shirk" or to give Allah an equal. Muslims see Christians doing this with the deification of Jesus.

**To translate the Quran is to betray the word of God.**

The Quran is written in Muhammad's tribal dialect of Arabic. It is seen as the only language which gives full measure of divine revelation. To translate the Quran is to betray the word



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of God. In reality, Arabic is extremely difficult to translate. Most Arab dialects are so difficult that the only way to communicate from tribe to tribe is to speak the Quran. Professor Wilfred C. Smith stated, “The Quran is in Islam what Christ is in Christianity, and Muhammad stands in the relation to it as the twelve apostles to the Logos” (pg. 57 Islam ed. John Williams, George Brailler: N.Y.).

There are 114 **Surahs** (*books*) in the Quran. They are arranged not by subject or chronology but by length beginning with the shortest to the longest.

The **Sunnahs** (*customs*) of Muhammad are the second source of authority. They are composed of **Hadiths** (*traditions*) relating to actions of the prophet. The Sunnahs are referred to when ethical questions arise for which there is no answer in the Quran. Scholarly study in the Middle Ages led to six collections known as the “Six Sound Books”. However, no canonization of these books has ever been agreed upon totally.

The **ijima** (*consensus*) of the past generations make up the third source of authority. The ijima would be used as long as it did not disagree with the Quran or Sunnahs.

When all else fails one can turn to the **qijas** (*measurements or analogies*) the fourth source of authority. The qijas move from the known to the unknown. For example, where the Quran prohibits drinking wine, the qijas forbid the use of other drugs and intoxicants.

### The practice of Islam

To become Muslim one must only declare belief in sincerity. Preferably this is done in the presence of a believer. There are **Five Pillars of Islam** that must be held and practiced:

1. **Shahadah** – Profession of faith:  
“There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah.” This must be said perfectly once in one’s life-time.
2. **Salat** or **Namaz** – Prayer five times a day facing Mecca. This is seen as a sign of surrender.
3. **Zakat** – Almsgiving. A specific portion of income is given to the Islamic community. One is also to distribute money to the beggar. (*Sources indicate the zakat can range from 1% of one’s total wealth to 2.5% of one’s income.*)
4. **Saum** or **Ruzh** – Fasting during the Holy month of **Ramadan**.  
One must abstain from eating, drinking and sexual relations during the daylight hours.
5. **Haji** – Pilgrimage to Mecca during the twelfth month of the year. This must be done once in a believer’s lifetime unless utter poverty prevents it. A proxy can be contracted in extreme situations.



A sixth item is held as a pillar by various sects:

6. **Jihad** – Holy War. Early Muslims believed it was their sacred duty to murder anyone who would not embrace the one true faith. Dying in Jihad is the only true assurance of eternal reward and the avoidance of eternal punishment.

Muslims believe in the Law of Moses (*Torah*), the Psalms of David, and the Injil or Gospels of Jesus Christ. Yet, they believe these writings are all distorted versions superseded by the Quran. Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians, are seen as “People of the Book” and are believed by Muslims to be superior to polytheists and unbelievers.

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Muslims also believe that God is so holy that he can only communicate with mankind through a progression of angels and prophets. The Muslim god is a god of judgment rather than grace, a god of wrath rather than love. They do not believe that Jesus Christ atoned for any sins and reject the Trinity and Deity of Jesus. They believe Jesus was taken bodily to heaven without having died (*Surah 4:157*). Seventy-five percent of Quran is taken from the Judeo-Christian scriptures.

Islamic rituals include meticulous rituals of washing hands, feet, head and arms before prayer. No icons, statues, symbols, pews, choirs, or musical instrument are allowed in the holy place. Daily prayer services of a congregation are preceded by a sermon on Friday noon. The Muslim eats no pork, drinks no intoxicating beverage, and shuns gambling, adultery and the breaking of one's word.

Divorce is allowed for men and a succession of marriage and divorce can greatly expand the five-wife limit. Women are inferior to men and have only half the brain of a man according to the Quran. To read and study the Quran is obligatory in Islam. The Ink of the scholar is said to be more valuable than the blood of a martyr.



### Sects of Islam

There are several sects of Islam. The most common sects are listed.

1. **Sunnis** – The vast majority of Muslims belong to this sect. Sunnis accept four caliphs in direct succession from Muhammad and no others. They practice a moderate form of Islamic interpretation (*90% of Saudi Arabians, 98% of Libyans*).
2. **Shiite** – The second largest sect, the Shiite are more literal in interpretation and application of the Quran and more militant and fanatical (*98% of Iran*). The leader (*Ayatollah*) must be a direct descendent of Muhammad.
3. **Ahmadiyan** – Founded in the 1800's, the Ahmadiyan comprise a small sect which have produced the bulk of Islamic apologetics against Christianity and Judaism. They are highly visible on American campuses and practice strong proselytizing techniques among students.
4. **Sufi** – The Sufi is the mystical sect which is rejected by many conservative Muslims. Sufi worship tends towards forms of pantheism.
5. **Nation of Islam (U.S.)** – Founded by Wali Fard in Detroit, MI in 1930. The Nation was a further development of the Moorish Science Temple of America founded by Noble Drew-Ali in the 1920's. The Nation required all to accept Islam and reject Christianity (*believed to be a white man's religion*), adapt Muslim names (*giving up slave names*) and to avoid contact and fellowship with whites whenever possible. Eventually blacks were to overthrow whites. Farad was succeeded by Elijah (Pool) Muhammad who demanded blacks be given a separate territory in the U.S. for a nation. He forbade any form of integration or intermarriage. The Nation moved into mainstream Islamic orthodoxy when Elijah Muhammad's son took over leadership in 1975. In 1978, Saudi Arabia's Abu Dhabi welcomed this American movement's return and officially recognized Warith Deen Muhammad as the head. Five years later Warith virtually disbanded the organization and the movement was absorbed into the larger body of orthodox Islam. A splinter group holding with the former radical beliefs is currently led by Louis Farrakhan.

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## Jihad

With the 9/11 Islamic terrorist attack on the United States, concern has grown in the understanding of Jihad. Jihad is the sacred struggle with the word or sword in the cause of Allah or holy war. There are four expressions of Jihad:

1. Jihad of the Tongue (*witnessing about the faith*)
2. Jihad of the Hand (*doing good works as an example of faith*)
3. Jihad of the Heart (*a force for implementing good*)
4. Jihad of the Sword (*defending the faith*)

Unlike Christian scriptures the Quran urges believers to fight for the cause of Allah and to kill pagans wherever they are found as in Surah 47:4:

**Therefore, when you met the Unbelievers (*in fight*), smite their necks; at length when you have thoroughly subdued them, bind a bond firmly (*on them*): thereafter (*it is time for*) generosity of ransom: until the war lays down its burdens. Thus (*are you commanded*): but if it had been Allah's will, He could have exacted retribution from them (*Himself*); but (*He lets you fight*) in order to test you, some with others. But those who are slain in the way of Allah, - He will never let their deeds be lost.**

This is not isolated as Surah 9:5 states:

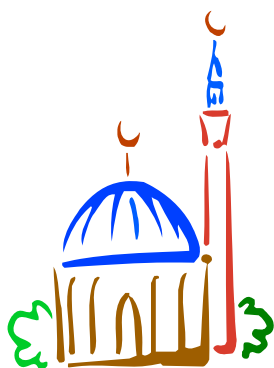
**But when the forbidden months are past, then fight and slay the Pagans wherever you find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem (*of war*); but if they repent, and establish regular prayers and practice regular charity, then open the way for them: for Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.**

In Surah 9:29 reference to People of the Book (*Christians and Jews*) is noted:

**Fight those who do not believe in Allah not the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which has been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger, nor acknowledge the Religion of Truth, (even if they are) of the People of the Book, until they pay Jiza with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued.**

Violence is traditionally approved against infidels and those who leave Islam. Apostasy is punishable by death. Fighting and killing are described as beloved activities. The purpose of Jihad is to do what ever it takes to establish Islam. Surah 47:4-5 guarantees a place in paradise for the Muslim Martyr and the bestowal of an honorable name upon the family. Some believe up to thirty family members can be assured of salvation though death in Jihad of a loved one.

In Muslim history, Muhammad willingly and exuberantly carried the sword for the cause of Allah. Even the current political boundaries of Islam have been set through this tradition. According to history on two occasions Muhammad ordered the assassination of people who mocked him poetic writings. For those who want to find justification for violence, the Quran and the Hadiths offer many examples.



### Key dates in Islamic history

- 570 – Birth of Muhammad
- 595 – Marriage to Khadija
- 610 – Beginning of revelation during Ramadan
- 622 – Flight (Hegira) to Medina
- 627 – Execution of 800 Jews by Muhammad
- 630 – Occupation of Mecca
- 632 – Muhammad performs Hajj to Mecca in March and dies in June in Medina
- 635 – Muslims conquer Damascus
- 638 – Muslims conquer Jerusalem
- 641 – Muslims conquer Egypt
- 642 – Muslims conquer Persia (Iran)
- 652 – Quran canonized
- 680 – Muhammad's grandson Hussein becomes martyred and first Shiite hero
- 711 – Muslim forces reach Spain
- 713 – Muslim forces reach India
- 732 – Muslim forces stopped in battle of Tours in Southern France
- 1099 – Christian Crusaders capture Jerusalem
- 1187 – Muslims retake Jerusalem from Crusaders
- 1453 – Ottoman Turks conquer Constantinople
- 1918 – Ottoman Turk empire defeated with German alliance in WWI. Jews allowed to settle in Jerusalem by British.
- 1948 – Israel becomes a nation
- 1924 – Turkey becomes a secular state
- 1980 – Iran Iraq war begins
- 1990 – U.S. Gulf War against Iraq w/ various Muslim alliances

### Glossary

- Allah** – God
- Ayatollah** – Spiritual master or leader in Islam
- Dervish** – Persian for “poor”
- Fuqua** – Lawyers or custodians of the law
- Hadith** – Acts of the prophet Muhammad
- Haji** – Pilgrimage to Mecca
- Hijrah**– Immigration
- Imam** – One who is an authority in Islamic law/ one who leads prayers
- Islam** – Literally “submission/peace”
- Jihad** – Literally “striving/Holy War”
- Jinn** – Demons
- Kabah** – Small black stone building which houses a meteorite supposedly given to Adam by Gabriel and found by Abraham who built it with Ishmael
- Khaliph/Caliph** – Office of spiritual/political leader who took over after Muhammad's death

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**Malaika** – Angels  
**Mecca** – Birthplace of Muhammad  
**Medina** – Holy City to which Muhammad fled  
**Minaret** – Tower from which call to prayer is given  
**Mosque** – Building in which Muslims pray  
**Muslim** – Adherent to Islam/ literally “one who submits”  
**Qiyas** – Measurements/analogies  
**Quran** – **Literally** “reading/recitation”  
**Ramadan** – Month of fasting  
**Rasal** – Apostle/ prophet/messenger  
**Salat** – Prayer five times a day facing Mecca  
**Saum/Ruzh** – Fasting during Ramadan  
**Shahadah** – Profession of faith  
**Shariah** – pathway  
**Sheikh** – Head of tribe/ learned man  
**Sunnah** – Traditions  
**Shiite** – Second largest sect of Islam  
**Shirk** – Worst sin/giving Allah a partner  
**Sufi** – Mystical sect of Islam  
**Sunnis** – Largest sect of Islam  
**Surah/Surat** – Divisions/chapters in the Quran  
**Umma** - Community  
**Zakat** – Tax/alms giving  
**Zamzam** – Well in Mecca from which every Muslim desires to drink

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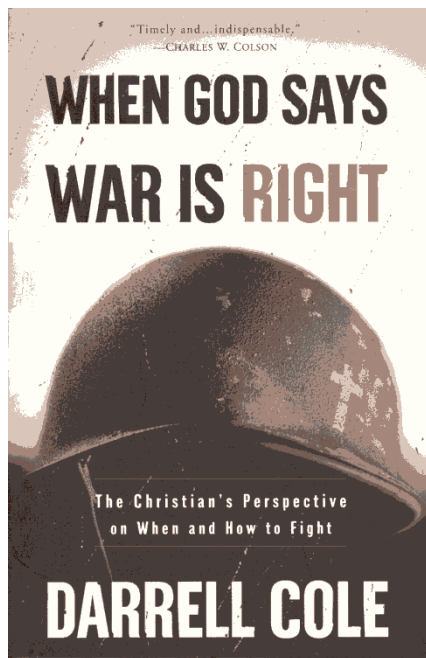
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## National Chaplain's recommended books



*When God says War is Right* by Darrel Cole

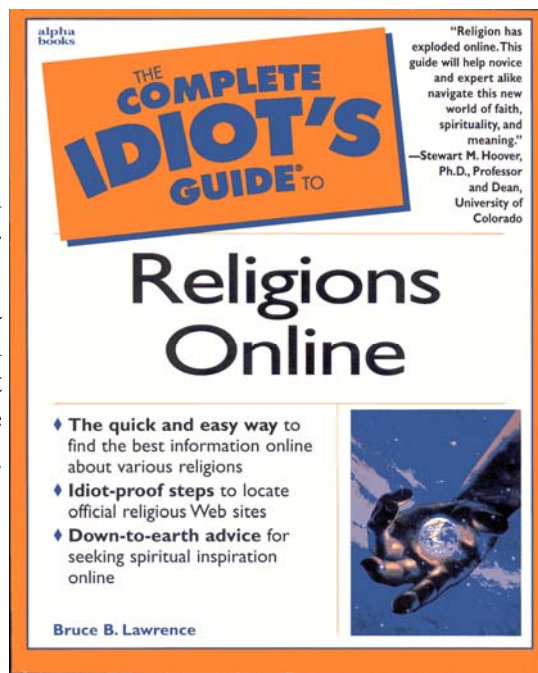
Colorado Springs: Water Brook 2002.

This is an historical overview of the Just War theory. No matter what your position, this is an excellent re-source. It is good food for thought and understanding on war from a Christian theological position. I wish I would have had it when I did my undergraduate work at a pacifist college in the 1970's.

*Religions on Line* by Bruce B. Lawrence

Alpha Books: Indianapolis 2000.

Our world is rapidly changing. World religions are moving in. "Never-before-heard-of" religions are rising up. Chaplains need to be informed! This is a good resource where to find information on the Internet. If someone asks you about a religion or particular beliefs all you have to say is, "Wait-a-minute" and presto, you're a scholar!



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## **Prayers and Readings taken from the Book of Worship For United States Forces**

**The Armed Forces Chaplains Board  
U.S. Government Printing Office  
Washington, DC 20402  
1974**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. **Amen.** (*Book of Common Prayer* 1928)

### **Invocations**

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the presence of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and glorify your holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

O God our Father, you have commanded the light to shine out of darkness and awakened us again to praise your goodness and to ask your favor. Accept now the sacrifice of our worship and thanksgiving. Make us to be children of the light and of the day, heirs of your everlasting inheritance. Remember, O God, your whole church and all our brothers who stand in need of your favor on land or sea, in air or space. May our lives ever praise your wonderful and holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Ever loving and eternal God, Source of the light that never dims and of the love that never fails, Life of our life, Father of our spirits: draw near to us, and by the remembrance of your ancient mercies, by the ministry of your church, teach us and lead us nearer to you. By all our conflicts, by all our aspirations, by all our fears, by all our joys and sorrows, by life and death itself, teach us and lead us nearer to you. **Amen.**

O God, who put into our hearts such deep desires that we cannot be at peace until we rest in you: mercifully grant that the longing of our souls may not go unsatisfied because of any unrighteousness of life that may separate us from you. Open our minds to the counsels of eternal wisdom; breathe into our souls the peace which passes understanding. Increase our hunger and thirst for righteousness, and feed us, we beseech you, with the bread of heaven. Give us grace to seek first your kingdom, and help us to grow as you add unto us all things needful. **Amen.**

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplications unto you, and have promised that you will hear the prayer of faith. Fulfill now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of your servants, granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the world to come life everlasting. **Amen.**

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We praise you, O God, for all your comings among the sons of men, but we are especially grateful for your coming among us in Jesus Christ our Lord. Help us to live in faithful expectation of his final victory and triumph over all the powers that oppose him. So fill us with hope and enthusiasm that we may celebrate now that glorious day when this world and all its people shall be his and he shall reign forever as Lord of all. **Amen.**

O Lord, you have given us the great hope that your kingdom shall come on earth, and your Son has taught us to pray for its coming. Make us ready now to give thanks for the signs of its dawning, and to pray and work for that perfect day when your will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven. We ask this in the name of Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Merciful Father, we are reverently grateful for the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ. We remember his humble birth, his gracious life of love and service, his death for us upon the cross. We acknowledge him as Lord of our life, and as we prepare to celebrate his advent, we dedicate ourselves anew to him. Accept this promise in his name. **Amen.**

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we give you thanks that in the fullness of time the Light dawned on a dark world and your Son was born in Bethlehem. We praise you that he came and that he Shall come again. We confess that the doors of our hearts are too low to receive the King of glory. We are too indifferent to go meet him. Come, we pray you, and by your Holy Spirit banish from us all that resists his entrance into our hearts. Make us, O God, a people who watch and pray for the day of his appearing. Even so, come, Lord Jesus; come quickly! **Amen.**

O Lord God, whom no man has seen nor can see, we bless you that you have been pleased to show is yourself in Jesus Christ, your Son,. We are grateful that in the fullness of time he came into this world and took upon himself our human nature. In him we see your love for us and are brought into fellowship with you. Accept our thanks, O Father, in the holy name of Jesus for this your inexpressible gift. **Amen.**

O God of the guiding star which brought the Gentile kings to worship the Christ-child: strengthen and encourage us who follow the star, and lead us into all dark places of the earth, letting the light of Christ shine on through us. May that day come when all men shall pay due homage to the King of kings, even Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Almighty God, you know that of ourselves we have no power to help ourselves. Keep us, we beseech you, both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may find defense against all adversities which may afflict the body and all evil which may hurt the soul; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

O Lord Jesus Christ, as on this day we recall your triumphal entry into Jerusalem, enter our hearts, we pray, and subdue them wholly unto your will. O King of grace and glory, come into our lives with all your strength, gentleness, and goodness. We acknowledge you as Savior and Redeemer, give you our joyous homage, and pledge never-dying loyalty. **Amen.**

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O God, by the example of your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, you have taught us the greatness of true humility, and now have called us to watch with him in his suffering. Help us to take the towel and basin and in humbleness of spirit to wash the feet of those who most need our ministry. Give us the graciousness to serve one another in all lowliness and thus fulfill the law of love in the name of your suffering Servant, even Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Thanks be to you, O God, for Jesus Christ, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross. Thanks be to you for Jesus Christ, who in the cross triumphed over sin and death, principalities and powers, and over all who desire to thwart your will in the world. Thanks be to you, our Father, for Jesus Christ, who in the cross revealed your love for us by dying for the ungodly; yes, even while we were yet sinners, he died for us. Thanks be to you, O God, for you have called us to take up the cross and follow Christ Jesus. Grant that we may, with courage and joy, remain his disciples, for in Christ's name we pray. **Amen.**

Almighty God, you have revealed to us in the life and teaching of your Son the true way to a life that is right and good in your sight. You have also shown us in his suffering and death that the path to the good life may lead to the cross, and the reward of faithfulness and obedience to your will may be a crown of thorns. Give us the grace to learn these hard lessons. May we take up our cross and follow Christ in strength of patience and constancy of faith; may we have such fellowship with him in his sorrow that we may know the secret of his strength and peace, and see, even in our darkest hour, the shining of eternal light. **Amen.**

Almighty God, Source of all life, by whose power our Lord Jesus Christ was raised from the dead: we praise you, we give you thanks for this great victory over sin and death. The resurrection of your Son, our Savior, has opened to us the door of abundant and everlasting life. May that same power work in us, raising us from the death of sin to newness of life. Our despair is changed to triumph, our fears to hope. We are grateful. Accept our thanks, O Lord, and may we prove our gratitude by selfless service in behalf of all those who need our love and care. May we show them the risen Christ in all we do. In his living name we pray. **Amen.**

O risen and victorious Christ, whose power and love destroyed the darkness of death of sin: ascend, we pray you, the throne of our hearts, and so rule our wills by the might of that immortality wherewith you have set us free, that we may evermore be alive unto God, through the power of your glorious resurrection: world without end. **Amen.**

We bless your holy name, O God, for all your servants, who, having finished their course, now rest from their labors. Grant us the courage, we pray you, to follow the example of their steadfastness and faithfulness, to your glory and honor; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

O God and Father of us all, we gather in sincere gratitude for all those who, at their country's call, have met the rude shock of battle and have surrendered their lives amid the ruthless brutalities of war. Forbid that their suffering and death should be in vain. We beseech you that, through their devotion to duty and suffering, the horrors of war may pass from earth and that your kingdom of right and honor, of peace and brotherhood, may be established among men. Comfort, O Lord, all who mourn the loss of those near and dear to them, especially the families

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of our departed brothers. Support them by your love. Give them faith to look beyond the trials of the present and to know that neither life nor death can separate us from the love and care of Christ Jesus, in whose name we pray. **Amen.**

#### **For Pardon**

O God our Father, before whom the lives of all are exposed and the desires of all known, be at work in our lives. Wipe out all our old secret and selfish desires, so that we may perfectly love and truly worship you, in Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Our Father, before all men come to respect and to love you. May you rule in every person and in all of life. Give us, day by day, those things of life we need. Forgive us our sins, just as we forgive those who have done us wrong. Let nothing test us beyond our strength. Save us from our weakness. For yours is the authority and the power, and the credit forever. **Amen.**

O God, whom Jesus called Father, we admit that we have done many wrong and wicked things and we have neglected doing many loving things. We are sorry that we have thought, said, and done such foolishness. Now we turn away from our mistakes. We are sick at heart, Father, when we think of them. Forgive us for not knowing what we do. Forgive us; in the name of Jesus, forgive us. Grant that we may so love you and serve you all our days that others will praise you. **Amen.**

Gracious Father, accept with favor this our sacrifice of praise which we now present. We offer to you ourselves, giving you thanks for calling us to your service, as your own people, through the perfect offering of your Son Jesus, our Lord; by whom and with whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory be to you, Father Almighty, now and forever. **Amen.**

Almighty God, in Jesus Christ you called us to be a servant people, but we do not what you command. We are often silent when we should speak, and useless when we could be useful. We are lazy servants, timid and heartless, who turn neighbors away from your love. Have mercy on us, O God, and, though we do not deserve your care, forgive us, and free us from sin; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Almighty God, you love us, but we have not loved you; you call, but we have not listened. We walk away from neighbors in need, wrapped up in our own concerns. We have gone along with evil, with prejudice, warfare, and greed. God our Father, help us to face up to ourselves, so that, as you move toward us in mercy, we may repent, turn to you, and receive forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Have mercy upon us, O God, according to your loving kindness; according to the multitude of your tender mercies blot out our transgressions. Wash us thoroughly from our iniquities, and cleanse us from our sins, for we acknowledge our transgressions, and our sin is ever before us. Create in us clean hearts, O God, and renew a right spirit within us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Our Father, we know that you would not love us for long except that your love is unchanging. We trust that you will look upon us with a sense of humor, for even when we are trying to

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confess our sins, we put into words the petty while leaving the gross unspoken. Help us to overcome our clowning and get down to that which is real. Take from us the burden of that which does not matter. Free us from the bewildering array of problems of our own making. Help us to wake up to the fact that in Jesus Christ our sin is forgiven and if we but take up his way of love we are free. **Amen.**

We confess to God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and before the whole company of the faithful, that we have sinned exceedingly in thought, word, and deed, through our own fault; wherefore we pray God to have mercy upon us: Almighty God, have mercy upon us, forgiving us our sins and delivering us from evil, confirming and strengthening us in all goodness and bringing us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

Almighty God, who made the light to shine in the darkness, shine now in our hearts. Cleanse us, we pray, from all our sins, and restore us to the light of your glory as we have seen it in the face of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. **Amen.**

May God the most merciful grant us pardon, forgiveness, and cleansing from all our sins through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Grant your faithful people, O gracious and loving Father, pardon and peace, that they may be relieved of the burden of their guilt and serve you with a quiet mind and their fellowmen with humility. **Amen.**

Deliver us, O Lord, from the bonds and burdens of our offenses, real or imagined; forgive us for the sins of omission and commission; restore to us the joy of salvation; in the name of Him who forgave both His enemies and His friends. **Amen.**

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of your great mercy have promised forgiveness of sins to all them who with sincere penitence and true faith turn to you: have mercy upon us; pardon and deliver us from all our sins; confirm and strengthen us in all goodness; and bring us into the joyous and abundant life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **Words of Assurance**

If we confess our sins to God, we can trust Him, for He does what is right-He will forgive us our sins and make us clean from all our wrongdoing. (*I John 1:9.*)

Jesus said: I will never turn away anyone who comes to Me. (*John 6:37.*)

God loved the world so much that He gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not die but have eternal life. (*John 3:16.*)

This is a true saying, to be completely accepted and believed: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. (*I Timothy 1:15.*)

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There is no condemnation now for those who live in union with Christ Jesus, who live according to the Spirit, not according to human nature. (*Romans 8:1,4.*)

The Lord redeems the life of His servants; those who trust Him will not be punished. (*Psalm 34[33]:22.*)

As the heavens are higher than earth, so great is His love to His saints. (*Psalm 103[102]:11.*)

### **For the Armed Forces**

O Lord God of hosts, stretch forth, we pray, Your almighty arm to strengthen and protect the soldiers of our country. Support them in the day of battle, and in the time of rest and training keep them safe from all evil. Endue them with courage and loyalty; and grant that in all things they may serve without reproach; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

O eternal Lord God, You alone spread out the heavens and rule the raging sea. Take into Your most gracious protection our country's navy and all who serve therein. Preserve them from the dangers of the sea and from the violence of the enemy, that they may be a safeguard unto the United States of America, and a security for such as sail upon the seas in peaceful and lawful missions. In serving You, O Lord, may our sailors serve their country; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

O Lord God of hosts, You stretch out the heavens like a curtain. Watch over and protect, we pray, the airmen of our country as they fly upon their appointed tasks. Give them courage as they face the foe, and skill in the performance of their duty. Sustain them with Your everlasting arms. May Your hand lead them, and Your right hand hold them up, that they may return to the earth with a grateful sense of Your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

O eternal Father, we commend to Your protection and care the members of the Marine Corps. Guide and direct them in the defense of our country and in the maintenance of justice among the nations. Sustain them in the hour of danger. Grant that wherever they may be loyal to their high traditions, and that at all times they may put their trust in You; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

O Lord our God, who stilled the raging of the seas by Your word of power: watch over, we pray You, the men and women of the Coast Guard as they sail upon their missions of vigilant aid. Grant them courage and skill and a safe return. Fill them with a grateful sense of Your mercy toward them; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

O God of wisdom and order, who filled the universe with the mysteries of Your power: guard, we beseech You, those who explore the secrets of space. Sustain them with the knowledge of Your mercy and bring them safely back to earth. Let not the achievements of cosmic exploration blind us to the glories of Your love for man; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. **Amen.**

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### **For Children**

Dear Lord and Father of us all, we give You thanks for the children You have placed in our care. Give us grace and wisdom to train them in Your faith and fear and love. May they give You due reverence and all the joyous loyalty of their young hearts, so that as they advance in years they may also grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus, who loved all children and blessed them; this we ask in His name. **Amen.**

O Lord Jesus Christ, who took the little children into Your arms and blessed them with Your love: bless, we beseech You, all the little ones who are dear to us. Keep Your hand upon them, dear Lord, to protect them from all evil and to uphold and guide them along the pathway of life. May they find joy in both serving and loving You; and may they early learn what this loving service means. To that end give us grace to live before them as Your true and faithful servants. **Amen.**

### **For Youth**

O Lord God, source of all strength, fountainhead of all wisdom: look in mercy upon our beloved young people; replenish them with Your truth. Teach them to follow the truth. Adorn them with purity of life; keep them strong in body, keen of mind and sound of soul. Guide them through the shadowy valleys of life. Make them conscious of Your presence with them as they gain the heights of glory in the glad sunshine of some victory. Comfort them when they are discouraged. May Your peace, which passes all understanding, abide upon them all the days of their life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **Classic Prayers**

Give me, O Lord, a steadfast heart, which no unworthy thought can drag downward; an unconquered heart, which no tribulation can wear out; an upright heart, which no unworthy purpose may tempt aside. Bestow upon me also, O Lord my God, understanding to know Thee, diligence to seek Thee, wisdom to find Thee, and a faithfulness that may finally embrace Thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Teach us, good Lord, to serve Thee as Thou deservest; to give and not to count the cost; to fight and not to heed the wounds; to toil and not to seek rest; to labor and not to ask for any reward, save that of knowing that we do Thy will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Lord, make us instruments of Thy peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy; for Thy mercy and for Thy truth's sake. **Amen.**

Christ be with me, Christ within me,  
Christ before me, Christ beside me,  
Christ to win me,  
Christ to comfort and restore me,  
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,  
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger, Christ in hearts of all who love me,  
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger. **Amen.**

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God be in my head, and in my understanding;  
God be in mine eyes and in my looking;  
God be in my mouth, and in my speaking;  
God be in my heart, and in my thinking;  
God be in mine end, and at my departing. **Amen.**

Grant me:  
The serenity to accept things I cannot change,  
The courage to change things I can,  
And the wisdom to distinguish the one from the other.

**For the Church in the World**  
***(This prayer may be used responsively.)***

You have made Your dwelling among us, God,  
And You are present wherever men live.  
We cling to this grace.  
Make us honor Your presence  
And make us wise and strong enough  
To build each other up into Your city on earth,  
The body of Christ,  
A world fit to live in,  
Today and forever.  
We ask you for bread and peace  
And Your answer, God, is Jesus Christ, Your Son.  
He is bread for the life of the world,  
Our hope and peace.  
We pray that He may be powerful here in our midst  
And that we may find gladness in this Man, Whom You have given us  
Here and now and forever. **Amen.**

God, it is Your happiness and life  
That one Son of Man  
Of all the men born into this world  
Should go no living with us,  
And that one name, Jesus Christ,  
Should inspire us from generation to generation.  
We are gathered here in Your presence  
To pray that we may hear and see Him  
And pass on His name  
To all who wish to receive it.  
Let Your Spirit move us  
To receive him from each other and from You,  
This Man who is our future,  
Who lives with You  
For all men

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And for the whole world. **Amen.**

#### **For Peace**

Lord God, we see the sins of the world in the light of Your only Son. Since His coming to be Your mercy toward us we have come to suspect how hard and unrelenting we are toward each other. We ask You to renew us according to His example. Let us grow like Him and no longer repay evil with evil, but make peace and live in truth today and every day of our lives. God, You are not happy with us when we make each other unhappy. You cannot bear it when we kill and destroy each other. Break, we pray You, the cycle of evil that holds us captive and let sin die in us as the sin of the world died in Jesus, Your Son, and death was killed. He lives for us today and every day. **Amen.**

#### **For the Person in the World**

By your word, Lord God, you set free every man imprisoned within himself; to freedom you have called us and to become men in the image and the spirit of Jesus Christ. We beseech you, give us the strength that his life has first provided; Give us the openness that he has prepared for us. Make us receptive and free, so that, with you, we may live for this world. We thank you, God, our grace, for being alive, tomorrow and today; for this earth; for bread and light; for the people around us, today, yesterday, and every day. We thank you for our lives here and now, lives laborious and full of joy. May neither future nor death separate us from Jesus Christ, who is your love for all mankind and all the earth. **Amen.**

#### **For Today**

O God, you have revealed yourself in the glory of the heavens and in the burning bush, in the still small voice and in the dread power of the hydrogen bomb. Make us aware of your presence as you come in judgment through the events of our time. Grant us to stand in awe and sin not. Help us so to use the fearful powers you have permitted us to know, that we may not work to man's destruction but for his fulfillment. Lift us above the suspicions and fears of our day, that we may bring peace among all men. This we ask, anxious, yet quiet in you; perplexed, yet certain in you; weak, yet strong in you; through him who is the Savior of us all, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

#### **In the Crises of Life**

O loving Father, help us in the crises of life. Teach us how to meet and conquer temptations, handicaps, frustrations, failures. We know we live in an imperfect world and that life is filled with thorns as well as roses. But sometimes trials come down upon us so suddenly, so swiftly, that we are bewildered; we cannot understand. God of the universe, lift us up at these times. Pour out upon us your mercy and your loving compassion. May we endure crises and testings as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. **Amen.**

Lord, we need you in our troubles, for they are many. We are burdened with the tragic sorrows of the world, with the needs and griefs of those we love, and with inner perplexities and problems that destroy our peace. We must choose between faith and fear, courage and cynicism, strength of character and collapse of life-and we would choose the better way. Therefore we seek in your vision and power and hope. Grant us grace to accept the materials of life we must accept and to use them worthily. Open our eyes to see opportunity here where we struggle, and to be

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challenged and not defeated by our troubles, knowing that those who are for us are more than those who are against us. Hear us for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Deepen, we beseech you, our appreciation of the opportunities that face us in this troubled time. Forgive us that so often we ask for comfort and ease. Teach us the high meaning of hardship and adversity. Make us worthy of the fathers and mothers who were before us, and send us out grateful that you have not called us into a finished world, but into an earth unfinished that we might bear a hand with you in its completion; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

O God, we know that you do not make a good world out of evil men and women. Cleanse our hearts, forgive our sins, amend our ways. Grant that your transforming grace may change our lives. Turn us from the grudges we have borne, the un-brotherliness we have practiced, the uncleanness we have harbored, the selfishness we have clung to. May we go forth a more fit body of your good soldiers to fight for righteousness; through Jesus Christ and in his Spirit we pray. **Amen.**

In the light of Jesus' life and teaching, his death and victory, sharpen our consciences, Lord, that we may feel the sin and shame of man's inhumanity to man. Inspire us with insight and courage, that we may combat private greed, social injustice, intolerance and bigotry, the ills of poverty, the misuses of power, and whatever else works enmity between man and man, class and class, race and race, nation and nation. We are sickened by the cries of hatred and the crimes of violence. We see no hope in war piled on war, and bloodshed forever answered by more bloodshed still. O Christ, our Lord, who did bring to your first disciples, frightened and dismayed by your crucifixion, such victorious assurance of your living presence and power, we need you now. Say to us once more, "In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." **Amen.**

O Lord, beset as we are by misleading counsels and wicked practices, we pray for guidance is a straight way of life. The devices and duplicity of the world are familiar and enticing, the sophistries of the cynical, and the inclinations, of our own hearts to self-deceit tempt us to lose the road, and many evil solicitations silence our consciences by their subtle persuasion. Give us, we pray, a firmer hold on your unchangeable laws of righteousness. Search our hearts and drive from them all indirection, equivocation, and pretense. Fortify our decision to live with sincerity, tranquility, and self-effacement for the sake of Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. **Amen.**

We would be true servants of your will, Lord, in this troubled time. For this war-torn earth, devastated by violence, we lift our penitent and anxious supplication. Tyranny and hatred rule the world; the light of learning is put out; the liberty of human souls is taken from them; the hopes of the young are destroyed; and the spirit and teachings of Christ, in whom alone is hope for men and nations, are trampled underfoot. Guide our nation in these days of difficult decisions. Lord God omnipotent, you are above all nations: se us for your purposes; work in us a moving penitence and amendment of life; save us from the anarchy of unbridled nationalism; teach us alike the necessity and the wisdom of learning to be one family; and through these turbulent days keep our minds and spirits steady. Come close to hearts so troubled over their private griefs that they can hardly feel the grief of the world. See how, discouraged and bereaved, smitten down and wary of life some of your servants are! We pray for a new spirit of

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triumph and hope. Reveal to us resources of power adequate to make us more than conquerors through Christ Jesus, who conquered all for us. **Amen.**

#### **For Authorities**

Lord God of hosts, you have made known your authority and delivered your orders for the day in your holy law; you have given persons authority to exercise leadership over us and have bidden us to obey them and to pray for them: we beseech you, fill our officers with zeal for the tasks delegated to them and with understanding and concern for those who, serving under them, must carry out those tasks. May they serve you with pure, exemplary lives and thereby give those whom they lead an ideal to follow. Give them wisdom to judge justly and with compassion in dealings with their subordinates, so that we may be ready to follow their leadership with a willing spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

O Father of the just, of your infinite goodness direct the hearts of all who bear authority. Help them with the power of your Holy Spirit to make laws in accordance with your will, and for the advancement of righteousness. Protect them from the snares of the enemy and the deceits of the world; let no pride of power betray them into rejection of your commandments; and grant that both rulers and people may with one mind serve you, our God and king; through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

#### **For Family and Home**

O God, the Father and defender of your people, whom neither space nor time can separate from such as continue in your keeping: be present, we beseech you, with those who are parted from us; prosper them and do them good; guide and direct them in all their undertakings; let nothing hurtful beset them and no evil befall them; and grant that, up-held by your right hand, they may arrive in safety at their journey's end; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

#### **For Enemies**

Have mercy, Father, upon those who live to enslave the world rather than let men live in freedom. Bring light to their darkened minds, peace to their warring hearts, and sanity to their warped designs. Hasten the day when international enemies are won to friendship by those who have the power of your love.

Order our lives and our society, O God, that our public enemies decrease and disappear. Through just laws and upright behavior remove the rewards which come from preying on the earnings of others. Convert these enemies to a way of life which will make them friends of the society in which they live.

Especially, O God, let us minister love to the enemies of the cross, whose end is destruction unless they be converted and turn from their evil way. Give them grace to be won as Paul was won, to be your servants with power.

We remember in these moments those who have grieved us personally with their hostility. Save them, O God, and unite us in love rather than being divided in enmity. Where we have sinned in

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this relationship, forgive, and make us instruments of your peace, after the example and by the power of your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

### **Thanksgiving**

Almighty God, our Father, we turn to you now in thanks and praise, for you are the Giver of our lives and we know ourselves to be your own. For all that we have and are because of your love, we offer you our thanks.

For food and drink, for clothing and shelter, for friends and families, for all who serve us by their professions and their concern, for pleasant days and the beauties of this earth, for books and schools and scholars, for our science and our learning, and the marvels of our modern age, for music and laughter and poetry and color, for help in times of need, and strength for moments of weakness, for all that we have and are because of your love, we give you our thanks. We give you our thanks.

Yet keep us sensible, O God, of those who do not share our wealth, whose lot is harsh and whose means are few, who struggle with life and often fail. Look upon the poor of the earth, and the handicapped, and the oppressed, and reach to them with your love. Help us to help them. Guide us into paths of useful service, and give us the will to serve in every place of need.

Nor let us forget our responsibility to the whole body of our race. Give us a sense of belonging, one to another, despite our nationalities to our races or our religions. Uphold those who are set in positions of authority, and give them the grace to be wise and kind, charitable and the seekers of peace. Let your peace come to our earth, dear Father. Bring an end to war forever. Cause men and nations to live in justice and harmony, with freedom for all.

And go with us as we go from here, that in all our ways we may be confident of your presence. When we are discouraged, give us a new heart and a new spirit. When we are tired, help us to find new strength. When we are afraid, restore our confidence in your power and your purpose for our lives. So may we serve you, O God, by being your people in service to all who need us, and in joy for your love. Through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. **Amen.**

O God, our Father: we are your own, your children in that we are born of your love, and your people in that we have been gathered to your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. For all that is your work, we give our thanks. For life and the abundance of this earth, for the richness of field and orchard, for the materials of our industry and commerce, for all the goods that serve us; we give you our thanks. For the opportunity of life, for schools and cultures, for the skills of our science and the imagination of our technology, for the perception of our artists, for the labors of all honest men; we give you our thanks. For the compassions of men, for the healers of mind and body, for the brave who seek to right the wrongs of our society, for social workers and lawyers and housewives and managers and truck drivers and teachers and machinists and bankers and merchants and musicians and clerks and secretaries, for all who in their way would give life grace; we give you our thanks. Look upon us in our need. Reach to us with your continuing compassion. Uphold us, and improve us. Frustrate our designs when they are corrupt with our self-conceits. Cause us to stumble under the weight of our self-concerns. Stifle in our throats the

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sound of our self-pity. And enable us to rise to the need around us. As there are those within our reach and in our world who are discouraged and lonely, afflicted and diseased, sorrowing and disturbed, move within us to move to them, to love them and to help them, to give them your grace. As peace and the pursuit of peace are the scorn of the worldly and the object of their wrath, as war and the threat of war are increasingly the blood of our economy, as wise men elected silence and good men bow to fear, move within us to seek the truth and to speak it, to work for peace in our time and justice for all men, to build your kingdom. As the institutions of men stand threatened by the changes of our day, as our government and our schools, our families and our churches, all struggle for the new stance a new world demands, as the leaders of men are themselves the lost and the perplexed. Move within us to bring strength and purpose, to encourage the right and correct the wrong, to find those new means which will best serve us and those who follow us. Keep us faithful to your love and to your people, that though we meet with reversal and failure, we may yet know the power you give that men might fulfill your will. Help us, O God, to serve you by serving others; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

### **Benedictions and Dismissals**

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **Amen.**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. **Amen.**

May the peace of God rule in your hearts, and the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom. **Amen.**

The Lord bless you and keep you:

The Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you:

The Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace. **Amen.**

God has raised from the dead our Lord Jesus, who is the Great Shepherd of the sheep because of his death, by which the eternal covenant is sealed. May the God of peace provide you with every good thing you need in order to do his will, and may he, through Jesus Christ, do in us what pleases him. And to Christ be the glory forever and ever! **Amen.**

Unto God's gracious mercy and protection we commit you; the Lord merciful look upon you with his favor, and fill you with all spiritual blessings and grace, that in this life, and in the world to come, you may be partakers of eternal life. **Amen.**

Go in peace, remember the poor. Be kind one to another. **Amen.**

Go now in love, as those called to do his work. And may God's peace, favor, and mercy bless you always. **Amen.**

Go forth in peace, but not in complacency; be strong; but not arrogant; have convictions, but be understanding of the beliefs of others; be eager to love, but not meddlesome; proud enough not to scorn yourselves, but sufficiently humble not to be jealous of your neighbors; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

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**For the Sick, Wounded, and Dying**  
**Catholic**

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you. I detest all my sins because of your just punishments, but most of all because they offend you, my God, who are all and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of your grace, to sin no more and to avoid the occasions of sin.

**For the Sick and Wounded**  
**Protestant**

O Lord, in your mercy behold, visit, and relieve your servant. Give *him* comfort in the knowledge of your love and sure confidence in your care. Defend *him* from the danger of the enemy and keep *him* in spiritual peace and safety; through our Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Almighty and most merciful God and Savior, extend to your servant the sure comfort of your gracious care. Help *him* to see this sickness as a time for strengthening both *his* spiritual and physical well-being. If it be your will to restore *him* to health, assist *him* by your Holy Spirit to lead the rest of *his* life in godly respect and for your glory. If your fatherly wisdom wills that *his* share in this present life be ended, give *him* grace to accept in faith the salvation won for *him* by Jesus Christ, your Son, and thus to dwell with you in the life everlasting; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

**For Someone at the Point of Death**

Father of mercies and God of all comfort, our only help in time of need: we humbly commend to your loving care the soul of our *brother*. We recognize that in this life, through lusts of the flesh and wiles of Satan, *he* defiled *his* soul; yet we entreat you, by the blood of Jesus Christ, to receive him as one mad pure and without blame before you; through the mercies of Jesus Christ, your only Son, our Lord. **Amen.**

**Commemoration of the Departed**

Depart, O Christian soul, out of this present world in the name of the almighty Father who created you, in the name of Jesus Christ his Son who redeemed you, in the name of the Holy Spirit who sanctified you. May your rest be in peace and your dwelling place in Paradise with God. O Lord, support us all the day long until the fever of life is over and our work is done. Then in your mercy grant us a safe and a holy peace at last; through our Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

**Commemoration of the Departed**  
**Jewish**

O Lord, my God and God of my fathers, my destiny is in your hands. If it be your will, grant me speedy healing of my wounds [illness]. But if not, then grant me complete trust in your wisdom and love, that I may accept whatever may be in store for me. Give me the power to understand

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that only with you is perfect knowledge and only through you can one find boundless happiness and eternal peace. Most sincerely and humbly I acknowledge my faith and trust in you: Sh'mah Yis-ro-ayl, Ah-doh-noi e-loh-hay-noo Ah-doh-noi e-chod. Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is One!

**Commemoration of the Departed  
Orthodox**

O Master and almighty Lord, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, you have told us you desire all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth, and that you desire not the death of a sinner but that *he* turn again and live. We therefore implore you to absolve your servant from all sins from *his* youth until now. You alone can loose the bonds and restore the contrite. You alone are the hope of the despairing and can remit the sins of everyone who trusts in you. Receive now in peace the soul of your servant and give it rest in that place where all your saints dwell; through the grace of your only-begotten Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, with whom you are blest, and your all-holy and life-creating Spirit; now forever and unto ages of ages. **Amen.**

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## **Additional Prayers**

### **“My Prayer for America”**

Today our flag was waving, my eyes were dimmed with tears  
Another war beginning, brought back so many years.

Once more an evil monster had raised his ugly head  
And many innocent people will soon be lying dead.

This lovely country, crowded with folks of every race  
Afraid to go about their life, afraid to show their face.

There will always be evil people, who only live to hate  
But love is stronger, and we must trust each, while we wait.

To see the sun arising, and chasing off the rain  
And pray our God will help us live the good life again.

I’ve seen the face of evil, many times before  
And my heart is filled with sadness to behold it all once more.

Dear God, please help the good men  
Who are running our country now,  
And give them help in every way,  
My head to thee I bow.

Mercia V. Tillman

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## The Grace of Being a Caregiver

Every caregiver experiences a call.  
For some, that call comes in the anxious voice of a family member or friend,  
    or with an imploring look in their eyes,  
    either of which says, "I need you."  
For some the call comes through anonymous faces lined with suffering,  
    both young and old, both near and far.  
For some, the call is handed from one generation to another, like a trust;  
    or from guide to pilgrim, like an honor;  
    or from lover to loved, like a gift.  
For some, the call is carried by that Voice from above, that Spirit at their side.  
However it comes, the communication is the same:  
    "You are wanted."  
However it's delivered, the question is implicit:  
    "Will you help?"

It's not easy being a caregiver.  
There are days when your vitality runs low,  
    When your spirit sags, when your anxiety peaks.  
There are times when the hours are too long,  
    when the demands seem too many, when the rewards feel too few.  
There may be instances when the other is hard to care for-  
    they may be angry or depressed and take it out on you;  
    they may feel lost or forsaken and push away your efforts to help.  
There may be periods when you feel unacknowledged or unappreciated,  
    when you feel lonely and alone.  
There may be times when what's expected of you seems beyond your abilities,  
    when what's asked of you is more than you have to give.  
Being a caregiver has demands and difficulties,  
    annoyances and adversities.  
It has its full share of pain.

Yet being a caregiver can be one of the most meaningful things you'll ever do.  
You can help a fellow human being, as you yourself would want to be helped.  
In the act of accepting, you will be accepted in a way you have not before.  
In the act of comforting, you will unexpectedly be comforted.  
In the act of dying with another, you will be reborn.  
There will be times in your caregiving when,  
    however tired you are, you're ever so live;  
    however separate you feel, you're never so connected;  
    whatever brokenness you've known, you've never felt more whole.

There will be times when you begin to fathom what it means to love.

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Through the discipline of care giving, you will experience marvelous new awareness.  
In being a blessing for another, you are blessed.  
In being a vehicle for growth, you grow.

In being a conduit for healing, you are healed.  
And, in holding out the promise that, no matter what has happened,  
transformation is still possible, then you yourself will be transformed.  
Caregiver and care receiver alike transform one another.  
One of you loves, and one of you is loved, and you're both the same.  
And you will know that transformation is not something *you* have accomplished.  
It comes from beyond you.  
You will realize, if you do not already,  
That you are cared for on the grandest scale possible.  
And the most fitting response you can make is a prayer  
That contains only four words:  
Thank you.  
Thank you.

James E. Miller, *The Caregiver's Book*

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## **Cure vs. Healing**

Cure offers what is; Healing offers what might be.

Cure is an act; Healing is a process.

Cure acts upon another; Healing shares with another.

Cure manages; Healing touches.

Cure seeks ultimately to conquer pain; Healing seeks to transcend the pain.

Cure ignores grief; Healing assumes grief.

Cure encounters mystery as a challenge for understanding; Healing encounters mystery as a ready channel for meaning.

Cure rejects death and views it as defeat; Healing includes death among the blessed outcomes of caring.

Cure may occur with our healing; Healing may occur without cure.

Cure separates the body from the soul; Healing embraces the soul.

Cure tends to isolate; Healing tends to incorporate.

Cure combats illness; Healing fosters wellness.

Cure fosters function; Healing fosters purpose.

Fred Reeklau