

Chaplain Iasiello's Remarks

ADMIRAL AND MRS CLARK, GENERAL AND MRS NYLAND, ADMIRAL AND MRS FALLON, ADMIRAL AND MRS BARRET, ADMIRAL AND MRS. WEAVER, FORMER CHIEFS OF CHAPLAINS, DISTINGUISHED FLAGS AND ECCLESIASTICAL ENDORSERS, ARCHBISHOP O'BRIEN, MOM, FAMILY, MY FELLOW FRANCISCANS, FRIENDS, DISTINGUISHED GUESTS, AND MOST ESPECIALLY, CHAPLAINS AND RELIGIOUS PROGRAM SPECIALISTS OF THE CHAPLAIN CORPS:

WHEN I FIRST ARRIVED IN WASHINGTON I GAVE MY STAFF SOME VERY SIMPLE INSTRUCTIONS:

I TOLD THEM, YOU CAN SEND ME ANYWHERE AROUND THE GLOBE, IN PEACE OR WAR, TO VISIT OUR TROOPS OR CHAPLAINS, OR THEIR COMMANDERS... AND THEY'VE DONE THAT.

I TOLD THEM, YOU CAN COD ME ON AND OFF CARRIERS, HOIST ME ON AND OFF SHIPS, SEND ME ON MILITARY TRANSPORTS, AND THEY'VE DONE THAT...

I TOLD THEM, YOU CAN SEND ME ON 20 MILE HIKES WITH MARINES, OR 5 AM RUNS WITH OUR CHAPLAIN SCHOOL BASIC COURSE STUDENTS IN NEWPORT, AND THEY'VE DONE THAT...

IN ESSENCE, I TOLD THEM I'D BE WILLING TO DO ALMOST ANYTHING TO FULFILL THE DUTIES OF MY JOB, BUT THERE WAS ONE THING I WOULD NOT DO... AND THAT WAS TO SPEAK AT A PODIUM... AFTER CHAPLAIN BLACK!

UP UNTIL THIS MORNING, THE STAFF FOLLOWED ORDERS AND HONORED MY REQUEST... BUT THIS MORNING, OF ALL MORNINGS, THEY FAILED.

LUCKY FOR ME, THE ROLE OF THE INCOMING CHIEF OF CHAPLAIN'S IN THIS CEREMONY IS LIMITED. I'VE BEEN INSTRUCTED TO READ MY ORDERS, ACKNOWLEDGE THE DIGNITARIES, AND THEN MOVE SWIFTLY TO MY SEAT.

I WOULD BE REMISS, HOWEVER, IF I DID NOT RECOGNIZE THE PASSAGE AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE 22ND CHIEF OF CHAPLAINS, RADM BLACK, AND HIS WONDERFUL WIFE BRENDA... TWO GREAT INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED MUCH TO OUR SEA SERVICES AND TO OUR CHAPLAIN CORPS AND HAVE BEEN SUCH DEAR FRIENDS FOR MANY YEARS.

BACK IN 1994, AS A BRAND NEW COMMANDER, I RECEIVED ORDERS TO REPORT TO THE ATLANTIC FLEET ... TO WORK FOR THE CHAPLAIN CORPS' NEWEST, AND YOUNGEST FLEET CHAPLAIN, CAPT BARRY BLACK. I HAD NEVER WORKED WITH BARRY BEFORE, AND SO I REPORTED ABOARD WITH SOME DEGREE OF UNCERTAINTY AND PROFESSIONAL CURIOSITY.

BUT WITHIN A FEW DAYS, CHAPLAIN BLACK PUT ME VERY MUCH AT EASE... AND HE MADE IT VERY CLEAR TO ME THAT WE'D BE WORKING AS A TEAM... THAT HE INTENDED TO TREAT ME AS A COLLEAGUE IN MINISTRY AND A PARTNER IN THE SUPERVISION OF THE CHAPLAINS AND RPS IN THE FLEET. BARRY BLACK HAS CONTINUED THAT SAME PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP TO THIS PRESENT DAY. HE'S BEEN A BOSS, A COLLEAGUE, A MENTOR, AND A DEAR FRIEND.

CHAPLAIN BLACK, BRENDA, KNOW THAT I SPEAK FOR ALL 1300 ACTIVE AND RESERVE CHAPLAINS AND MORE THAN A THOUSAND ACTIVE AND RESERVE RPS... IN SAYING, YOU WILL BOTH BE SORELY MISSED.

THREE YEARS AGO, I WAS HUMBLLED AND HONORED TO ASSUME THE DUTIES OF CHAPLAIN OF THE MARINE CORPS AND DEPUTY CHIEF OF CHAPLAINS. TO NOW SERVE AS THE 23RD CHIEF OF CHAPLAINS, AND AS A SHEPHERD TO THE SHEPHERDS OF THE NAVY, MARINE CORPS, COAST GUARD AND MERCHANT MARINE... IS A DISTINCT PRIVILEGE... AND ONE THAT I DO NOT ACCEPT LIGHTLY.

I'VE ALWAYS FELT THAT CHAPLAINS WERE VERY FORTUNATE TO SERVE IN THE MILITARY CHAPLAINCY FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS:

FIRST, THE CHAPLAIN CORPS HAS BEEN BLESSED IN THAT WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO RECRUIT SOME OF THE MOST TALENTED, MOTIVATED AND DEDICATED CLERGY IN THE COUNTRY TODAY: MINISTERS, PRIESTS, RABBIS, AND IMAMS WHO ARE WILLING TO STAND SIDE BY SIDE WITH AMERICA'S FINEST YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN... BOTH ON AND OFF THE FIELD OF COMBAT.

SECOND, I'VE ALWAYS FELT THAT MILITARY CHAPLAINCY IS A SIGN AND SYMBOL OF WHAT COULD BE THE FUTURE OF CLERGY RELATIONS IN THE CIVILIAN SOCIETY-AT-LARGE . CLERGY OF DIFFERENT FAITHS AND MYRIAD DENOMINATIONS WORKING SIDE BY SIDE TO CARE FOR THE NEEDS OF ALL... NOT JUST PERSONS OF THEIR OWN FAITH GROUPS OR DENOMINATIONS... CHAPLAINS WORKING SIDE BY SIDE TO PROVIDE AND FACILITATE THE BEST PASTORAL CARE AVAILABLE... ANYWHERE... REGARDLESS OF GENDER, RACE, OR CREED OR NEED.... CLERGY EXHIBITING A SPIRIT OF COOPERATION AND ECUMENISM THAT IS QUITE POSSIBLY A TEMPLATE FOR QUALITY MINISTRY IN THE FUTURE... I LIKE TO CALL IT A MINISTRY WITHOUT BOUNDARIES.

THIRD, AS MILITARY CHAPLAINS OUR TARGET GROUP OR PRIMARY CONGREGATION FOR MINISTRY IS A SERVICEPERSON 18 TO 25 YEARS OF AGE.... YOUNG PEOPLE WITH A HUNGER FOR LIFE, FULL OF QUESTIONS ABOUT THE MEANING OF LIFE... FULL OF PROMISE AND TALENT... A YOUNG AND ATTENTIVE CONGREGATION THAT MOST CIVILIAN CLERGY WOULD LOVE TO SEE IN THEIR CHURCHES, SYNAGOGUES, AND MOSQUES. AND WE AS NAVY CHAPLAINS HAVE THEM AS A CAPTIVE AUDIENCE OR CONGREGATION THROUGHOUT THEIR TIME IN THE MILITARY... AND SOMETIMES ON DEPLOYMENTS FOR SIX MONTHS AT A TIME.

THE GREAT THEOLOGIAN YVES CONGAR... WAS ONCE ASKED TO DESCRIBE ONE OF THE 20TH CENTURY'S MOST INFLUENTIAL ECUMENICAL LEADERS, ANGELO RONCALLI, JOHN XXIII.

CONGAR SAID, *THE SECRET OF JOHN'S PERSONALITY AND HIS SUCCESS AS A SPIRITUAL LEADER WAS THAT HE LOVED PEOPLE MORE THAN POWER.*

THE MOTTO ETCHED IN OUR CHAPLAIN CORPS SEAL REFLECTS THAT SAME SPIRIT ... VOCATI AD SERVITIUM... FOR AS NAVY CHAPLAINS WE HAVE BEEN CALLED TO SERVE... TO SERVE OUR GOD, TO SERVE GOD'S PEOPLE, TO SERVE OUR SEA SERVICE INSTITUTIONS, AND TO SERVE ONE ANOTHER THAT WE MIGHT THEN EMPOWER EACH OTHER TO SERVE THE NEEDS OF ALL.

CHAPLAINS, RPS, LET THAT THOUGHT CONTINUE TO GUIDE OUR MINISTRY AND OUR SERVICE TO THE SEA SERVICES THROUGHOUT THESE NEXT FEW YEARS.

MAY WE ALWAYS VALUE PEOPLE MORE THAN SYSTEMS;

MAY WE ALWAYS PLACE THE NEEDS OF OTHERS ABOVE OUR OWN....

AND MAY ANY RANK, POSITION, PRIVILEGE, OR AUTHORITY GRANTED TO US AS CHAPLAINS ALWAYS BE USED TO SERVE THE CRITICAL NEEDS OF THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN PLACED IN OUR PASTORAL CARE...

MAY GOD BLESS THE GREAT MEN AND WOMEN OF THE SEA SERVICES, MAY GOD BLESS OUR SACRED MINISTRY AS CHAPLAINS, AND MAY GOD BLESS OUR BELOVED NATION THAT SHE MIGHT ALWAYS STRIVE FOR A JUST AND LASTING PEACE, NOT ONLY FOR ITSELF, BUT FOR ALL THE PEOPLES OF THE WORLD.

- **Return to seat and remain standing**