

Deanery for the Chaplaincy



SELF-DENIAL OR SELF-HELP? *Submitted by Kenneth M. Bolin US Army*

"God helps those who help themselves." That comment reverberates throughout our media, and many people agree with it wholeheartedly. If you think that it exists in the Bible, you are one of many to think so, but you would be wrong. The Bible actually communicates the message that God helps those who cannot help themselves. If we possess the capacity to do something, then we also possess the responsibility to do it. For those who observe historical traditions, the season of Lent is upon us. It is the original reason behind the parties of Mardi Gras in New Orleans and Carnival in Rio de Janeiro. It is the excuse for people to give up their favorite sweet, or to commit to going to the gym, or to give up texting, for those who are courageous enough to do so in our society. Is it really about self-denial though? Are those who approach Lent from this perspective actually denying themselves, or merely working toward something that they deem to be better? My wife jokes about the statement, "nothing tastes as good as skinny feels." Life is about priorities and choices. When it comes to Lent, to give something up really means that we're looking for something better. Far too often, though, better gets in the way of what is best. When I was an infantryman, my chaplain, Chaplain (Major) Dan Middlebrooks, had a little card he passed out that read: "Good, better, best. Never let it rest, until your good is better and your better is the best." What is best? It's not Conan's answer of "to crush your enemies, see them driven before you, and to hear the lamentation of their women." No, we need to set our sights so much higher. Lent is not a season for simple physical improvement; it seeks after the core of what and who we are. It is a time of spiritual renewal, and renewal often only happens when in some kind of state of suffering.

For me, as a Christian, the things I commit to for Lent have a singular focus – to grow more spiritually mature, growing closer to God. Relationship – it's what everyone needs. Over 58% of suicidal situations are connected to relationship issues. The problem with us as human beings is that we aren't perfect. We let each other down, and we do so frequently. No human relationship will ever be perfect. The Army's Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Program defines spiritual fitness as, "Strengthening a set of beliefs, principles or values that sustain a person beyond family, institutional, and societal sources of strength." We all need something to carry us through those times, something to strengthen us when we are failed by our families, organizations, or societies. We need a relationship with God. Times like Lent give us an opportunity to focus fully on that kind of growth. So while many people will talk about Lent as self-denial, it's really a time of self-help, seeking after that which is the real best in life. So take a step toward a little suffering, knowing that, in the end, you are not running away from something small, but rather running toward some One who is Holy.

Faith & Family



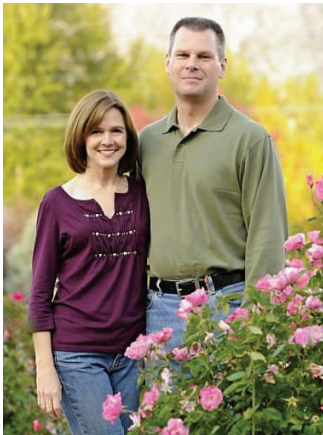
CHAPLAIN, MAJ DANIEL WATERMAN, HILL AIR FORCE BASE, UTAH

A year ago I was deployed to Kirkuk Airbase, Iraq. On Ash Wednesday, as I stood in my tiny room during Morning Prayer, I asked God if there was anything in particular that I should be learning as I went into Lent. I must confess that I wasn't necessarily looking for "a word from the Lord" with this question. I might have just been trying to sound more "spiritual" than I even felt at that moment, but I asked and God answered. He told me that the season was to be about my faith and His faithfulness. I don't know about you, but for me, this didn't sound like such an easy undertaking. And guess what? It hasn't been. In the past year, the Watermans have experienced the separation of a deployment and all that entails. We have received PCS orders during that deployment, worked hard to make the move, and then had those orders cancelled. We have experienced the challenges of re-integration after a deployment and the work stress that frequently follows. We have been in a constant state of flux for the past several months waiting for new orders that ultimately never arrived. It has been a challenging year.

But as challenging as "increasing your faith" can be, there was another part-an ultimately more important part-of God's word to me on Ash Wednesday 2010: that we were to rely on God's faithfulness. At every turn, over the course of this past year, God has demonstrated his faithfulness. He brought me home safely from Iraq. He has blessed Julia and me with 20 wonderful years of marriage and four healthy children. He brought new partners in ministry to Hill Air Force Base. And most importantly, God shows his faithfulness through His Word, through liturgy, and through sacrament each day. Please continue to pray for your military chaplains... including this one.



"Our Chaplains and their Families.."



A CHAPLAIN'S WIFE..... By JULIA WATERMAN

Military chapel. Those two words strike uneasiness in the hearts of most chaplains' spouses. It is the thing that most makes us feel like missionaries. Deployments remind us of our true dependency. Frequent moves evoke feelings of sisterhood with Sarah and Zipporah. But the nature of worship in a military chapel? That is more like an arranged marriage!

Worshipping in a military chapel can be disheartening. Chaplains do not have to profess Christ to be a Protestant chaplain. They simply have to be endorsed by an agency considered to be Protestant by the military. Hence, we have sat in chapel pews and listened to heresy. We have been in chapels with four children under seven and no childcare was available. Then there was the deaf, contract piano player who cut her fingernails during prayer. We have never had a children's program that we did not start nor a women's ministry (in the AF) that I have not begun. My teenagers have never had a youth group. The congregations tend to be spiritually young and lack commitment. I have tried taking the children to an off-base church while Daniel led worship on-base, but I just couldn't do it. Other chaplains' wives are able to make that transition. God has not released me to leave the chapel yet (Trust me. I've asked!). My heart is with my husband.

So how do we make the best of this mission field? How do I take my eyes off of what I feel like my family is missing and focus on what God is asking of us? Prayer. The down-on-your-knees, seeking-the-face-of-God kind of prayer. I have asked the Lord to give me a heart for the group of people that gather every week at the base chapel. We pray that the Lord would meet the needs of our teens through listening to the Word preached every week. The upsides of worshipping on base is that we get to love on people that wouldn't step foot inside of a traditional church. In Florida, they came in bathing suits. In Utah, they come in ski bibs. The unchurched. Non-believers. The wounded. The searching. Women overwhelmed with life when their husbands are gone. Families on the verge of splitting up. In the women's group that we've started this year, we've had infertility, a divorce, family deaths, dementia, deployments, job losses, a frequently hospitalized child....the whole gamut of life in a broken world. What a privilege to be able to apply to these wounds the healing of the Holy Spirit and to point these precious women to Christ. We've been blessed to help people feel connected in a lifestyle that by its very nature is isolating. We've welcomed people into the Kingdom and had baptisms. And this year? God has brought two Anglican priests together to preach in a powerful way. We have a Gospel choir leading worship and a charismatic Wing Chaplain praying over it all. Now isn't that a taste of heaven?!



INSIDE the Deanery

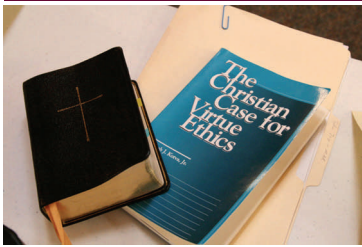
Bearing Fruit



NEW ORDINATIONS-FALLS CHURCH, VA

On Saturday April 16th, The Rt. Rev. David Bena and The Rt. Rev. Derek Jones ordained The Rev. Ric Renne (Ch, Lt Col, USAF, Retired), The Rev. Josh Davis, and The Rev. Rich Rojas (Ch, Capt, USAF) to the Deaconate (Transitional), at the Church of the Epiphany in Herndon, VA. Please pray for these men and their families as they continue their journeys to Priestly Holy Orders in the Anglican Communion!

CANA EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP SEMINAR-SPRING CANYON COLORADO



The Deanery's 1st Executive Leadership Seminar was held March 20-26th at Spring Canyon Retreat Center in Colorado. The seminar featured a targeted week of extensive study with a goal of examining the "Crowning Virtue" of magnanimity, or greatness of soul, and raise some of the most profound questions of life so chaplains can be better prepared to help those they teach and council. Seminar Director and moderator Dr. Greg Jesson and John Jay Institute Founder & President, The Rev. Alan R. Crippen II, were instrumental in guiding our chaplains through the ethical issues of what it means to be leaders and guardians of peace and beacons of light for an increasingly convoluted age. We were all extremely blessed and empowered to carry on our commission as servants of our Lord Jesus. The John Jay Institute the only faith-based, intercollegiate organization in America that is exclusively dedicated for preparing leadership for public service.



Pictures courtesy of Chaplain (Lieutenant Colonel) Mark B. Nordstrom-OFFICIAL Photographer "Thanks Mark!"

