



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION of CIVIL AVIATION CHAPLAINS

IACAC NEWSLETTER

June 2016

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I was introduced a few months ago at an induction training course for new aviation security officers in this way:

"This is George. He's one of the chaplains. You'll see the chaplains wandering aimlessly around the airport."
"Thanks, for that." I responded – and then felt the need to explain that what looked like 'aimless wandering' around the airport was, actually a very well-thought-through strategy on the part of my chaplaincy colleagues.

I now use that exchange in every induction talk I give to new-starters at Manchester Airport as a way of emphasising how horrified we would be to know that any staff colleague or member of the public might think that any member of the chaplaincy team was too busy to spend time with them.

As I was preparing to be ordained priest in 1994, a very formative book (and for some reason, I remember, I chose to read it sitting in a pew in the empty church) was *The Contemplative Pastor* by Eugene Peterson. He pulls no punches to those who aspire to a ministry of busy-ness. "the word *busy* is the symptom not of commitment but of betrayal. It is not devotion but defection. The adjective *busy* set as a modifier to pastor should sound to our ears like adulterous to characterize a wife, or embezzling to describe a banker." He goes on: "I am busy because I am vain. I want to appear important. Or else the I become busy [because] I am lazy. I indolently let other people decide what I will do instead of resolutely deciding myself." (an article at www.christianitytoday.com/le/1981/summer/8113070.html?aging=off probably conveys Peterson's message better than I can!)

"Great", I thought, at various points over the next three years, which included the birth of two children, the death of a parent, and the departure of not one but two supervising ministers, which left me trying to manage two (and occasionally three) roles in the church. "now I can add guilt at being so busy to everything else I have to worry about!"

But I have tried very hard to hold on to these challenging words, even though, at times, I admit that sometimes, the best I have been able to manage is to try hard to appear not to be busy. It's a start.

I often tell people that if I had had the same approach to airport ministry as I had at one point to parish ministry, I would have been dead within a week. Because airports are often 24 hours a day operations, and those who work on shift will just assume that whoever picks up the phone is also on shift, it is possible to work literally every hour God gives. Now I work in an airport context, I simply have to designate a point at the end of the working day to stop and go home, or to the theatre, or find a hill to walk.

Some of us thrive on being busy, and if we're honest, on being needed and being important. Many of our airport colleagues are already trapped in a cycle of having to get to work early, stay late, and to be seen to be indispensable while they are at work, to skip lunch or eat it while working. It is noteworthy that when I first read Eugene Peterson's words I neither owned a mobile phone nor had an email account. The world is now infinitely more demanding of all of us than it was even in 1993!

I mention this because of a number of cases of workplace stress around the airport and also that, here in Manchester, we are just about to enter our 'busy season'. Of course, there is nothing worse, when you really are busy, to meet someone who has 'all the time in the world' to chat and we need to avoid being 'that person'. (I once took a placement student with me to visit one of our car parking teams at the moment they had just mislaid a car-owner's key (*or so they thought. It transpired that it was an illegally-parked vehicle, so there was no key to find.*). My student colleague tried to initiate a thoughtful and theoretical conversation about what kind of systems they had in place to ensure that keys didn't get lost. I quickly removed her from the area before she started a fight!)

Exercising a ministry of service to an airport community, means that sometimes (often!) we simply put ourselves at the disposal of those whom we serve, and if there is a crisis which requires an urgent response, then we need to respond.

The air traffic control tower is the calmest place in the airport. It is, in one way, the 'calm centre' of the whole operation. We should aspire to be something similar at ground level, for our colleagues and for the public we meet, for our chaplaincy colleagues, and, above all, for the sake of our own ministry. Of course, how to achieve that is something we probably need to minister to (and be ministered to by) one another.

...Which is why it is so important for us to meet together, so please do join us in Paris for (and in your national and regional networks between) our annual IACAC conference!

With every blessing,



George

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IACAC ANNUAL CONFERENCE PARIS **23rd -28th August 2016**

Post Conference Tour- 28th August -1st September

Registrations for the Paris Conference have now been open for nearly 2 months. If you are planning to attend the conference and have not yet registered please go to our website www.iacac.info and follow the links. Once you are registered you will be sent a link for paying either your deposit or the full amount.

Remember if you are coming to the conference from outside Europe, the special registration rate closed on the 1st June and you must now pay the full conference rate. To be accepted, all registrations must be accompanied by the payment of at least the deposit at the time of registration. Registrations will close on the 15th July. For any inquiries please contact our host chaplain, Rev Pierre DeMareuil vp@iacac.info

The conference accommodation is in 2 of the airport hotels, and you have the opportunity to choose either a standard or economy type hotel. Both hotels are accessible by shuttle bus from the airport terminals and are quite close to each other.

Breakfast each day will be at the hotels, the economy type hotel will offer a continental breakfast while the other will have a full breakfast service, other meals will be at various venues according to the program.

Nights included in the conference fee are-23rd, 24th, 25th, 26th, & 27th August [5 nights]. All meals but dinner on Thursday 25th August are included in the registration. Dinner on the 25th August is at your own choice and expense either during an evening free in Paris or at the hotel.

The conference ends on the evening of Saturday 27th August with the Gala Dinner beginning at 7pm. The

theme of this year's Gala Dinner will be "Rock N' Roll" so get out your dancing shoes and start practising.

We look forward to seeing you in Paris for what promises to be a very interesting program. Details of the Conference program and Post Conference Tour are available on our website www.iacac.info

EXECUTIVE BOARD NOMINATIONS

Nominations for the positions of President, Vice President, Secretary and Media Officer for election at the 2017 Annual Business Meeting will be received at the beginning of the Paris Annual Business Meeting. Nomination forms for these positions are now available from the Secretary secretary@iacac.info. Please give some thought and prayer to whom you would like to see leading our Association into the start of the next fifty years.

NEWS FROM OUR CHAPLAINCIES

Fr Glenn O'Connor from Indianapolis is a man of many talents. As well as his work as a chaplain at Indianapolis Airport, for 41 years Fr Glenn has worked on race days at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. His day starts at 4:30 am and along with saying many Masses for those attending, he works alongside the pit crews servicing the race cars. Fr Glenn has a parish, is a spiritual leader for Central Indiana Cursillo and a speaker for Catholic Athletes For Christ gatherings. But these things are not his only focus. Fr Glenn co-founded *Seeds of Hope*, a house for chemically dependent women over the age of 18. For his work with *Seeds Of Hope* last month Fr Glen received the Jefferson Award. This is a national award across the USA for public service and was, in part, started by Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis. Congratulations Fr Glenn on all you do within your community.

Welcome to the Revd Julius Reid from Charleston International Airport who has recently become a member of IACAC. We look forward to you being part of our Association.

Melbourne Airport recently held its emergency plan practice involving all the state emergency services. Like most airports around the world, the chaplains have an important role within the plan and participated fully in the day

Messages have come from chaplains who have already registered for the conference saying how much they are looking forward to meeting up with friends made at other conferences and making new friends.

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

It requires strength to stand up for yourself. It requires even greater strength to stand up for others

Robert Moore, Massachusetts 2013