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The Voice for Chaplaincy - Chartered by Congress - Serving Since 1925

Weekly Newsgram - January 10th 2018

Confident Pluralism **National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces** ***Meeting this week in Alexandria, VA***



[NCMAF](#) is a voluntary association of over 150 religious denominations and faith groups who recruit, endorse and provide oversight for religious ministry professionals who desire to serve as chaplains in any one of the branches of our Armed Forces. The common vision of the members is to provide chaplains who are credible, committed to their faith, open to all persons, able to meet all military standards, and who represent the highest standards of their faith communities. NCMAF is a strategic partner of the MCA as together we advocate and support chaplaincy.

[Dr. John Inazu](#), Sally D. Danforth Distinguished Professor of Law and Religion at Washington University in St. Louis, served via a recording as the keynote speaker on the topic of Confident Pluralism.

Below is a synopsis of the concept of Confident Pluralism taken from Dr. Inazu's [paper](#) proposing his [book](#) of the same title. After identifying several problematic issues related to living in a pluralistic society the author goes on to say.

These deep and often irresolvable differences call into question our constitutional aspiration for "a more perfect union," our national metaphor of a great "melting pot," and the promise of our nation's seal, E pluribus unum ("Out of many, one").

Our differences pervade our beliefs, preferences, and allegiances. They affect

not only what we think, but also how we think, and how we see the world. The philosopher John Rawls called it the "fact of pluralism"-the recognition that we live in a society of "a plurality of conflicting, and indeed incommensurable, conceptions of the meaning, value and purpose of human life."⁷

Not all of our differences are problematic. Most of us think some difference is good, that this variety of perspective makes life more interesting. I think the world is a better place because I pull for the Duke Blue Devils and some of my friends cheer for lesser basketball teams.

On the other hand, most of us do not think that all difference is good. We can all name things that we think the world would be better off without. This is especially true when it comes to our moral beliefs. We might prefer a society in which everyone agreed about what counts as a justifiable homicide, a mean temperament, or a good life. What are we to do in light of our deeply held disagreements?

The philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau offered one response: "it is impossible to live at peace with those we regard as damned."

Confident Pluralism insists that Rousseau was wrong: our shared existence is not only possible, but also necessary. Confident Pluralism offers a political solution to the practical problem of our deep differences. Instead of the elusive goal of E pluribus unum, it suggests a more modest possibility-that we can live together in our "many-ness."

Confident Pluralism takes both confidence and pluralism seriously. Confidence without pluralism misses the reality of politics. It suppresses difference, sometimes violently. Pluralism without confidence misses the reality of people. It ignores or trivializes our stark differences for the sake of feigned agreement and false unity. Confident Pluralism allows genuine difference to coexist without suppressing or minimizing our firmly held convictions.

We, as chaplains, are committed to providing religious ministry in a pluralistic environment. Practically every day some conflict comes our way challenging our ability to negotiate the demands of our call. Your endorsers are considering these same challenges seeking common understanding of how to continue forward together in the demanding times facing our nation. Please pray for them

Lyman Smith
Executive Director

Improving Mental Health Resources for Veterans



The President has signed an Executive Order to improve the mental health resources for veterans transitioning from active service to civilian life.

This Executive Order directs the Departments of Defense, Veterans Affairs and Homeland Security to develop a plan to ensure that all new Veterans receive mental health care for at least one year following their separation from service.

The three departments will work together and develop a Joint Action Plan to ensure that the 60 percent of new Veterans who currently do not qualify for enrollment in healthcare - primarily due to lack of verified service connection related to the medical issue at hand - will receive treatment and access to services for mental health care for one year following their separation from service.

"We look forward to continuing our partnership with the VA to ensure veterans who have served our country continue to receive the important mental health care and services they need and deserve," said Secretary of Defense James N. Mattis.

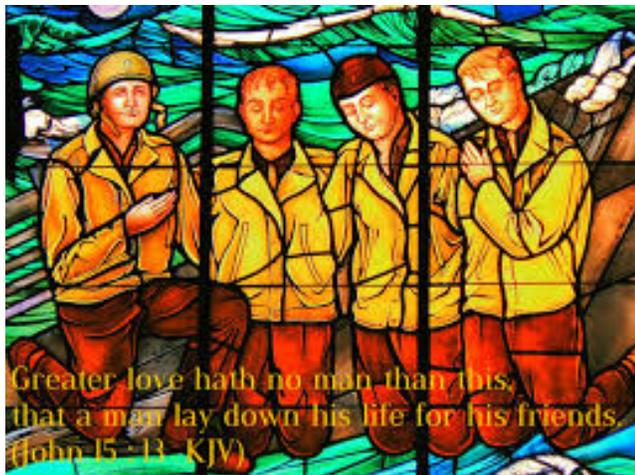
"The Department of Homeland Security is where many Veterans find a second opportunity to serve their country-nearly 28 percent of our workforce has served in the armed forces, in addition to the 49,000 active duty members of the United States Coast Guard," said Secretary of Homeland Security Kirstjen Nielsen.

"This critically important executive order will provide our service members with the support they need as they transition to civilian life. These dedicated men and women have put their lives on the line to protect our nation and our American way of life, and we owe them a debt we can never repay. We look forward to working with the VA and DOD to implement the President's EO," said Secretary Nielsen.

The 50th Annual Four Chaplains Day Banquet

Honoring

*THE FOUR CHAPLAINS
& THE CREW OF THE
USAT DORCHESTER*



The 75th Anniversary of the Sinking

2018 Gold Medallion recipient:
LTG. Nadja Y. West, US Army Surgeon General

The 2018 Humanitarian of the Year:
Twilight Wish Foundation-Cass Forkin

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

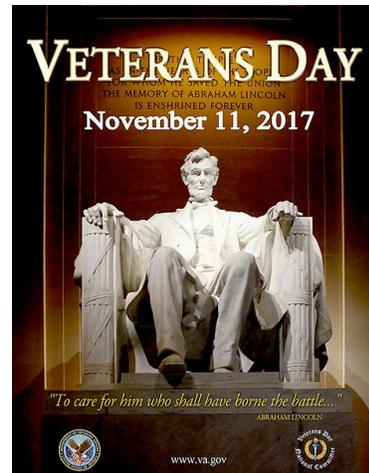
Steven A. Schaick, Ch, Brig Gen,
USAF Deputy Chief of Chaplains

Thursday, February 8, 2018
Sheraton Philadelphia Society Hill Hotel
1 Dock Street (2nd & Walnut Streets) Philadelphia, PA 19106

The Four Chaplains Memorial Foundation 1201 Constitution Avenue The Navy Yard-Bldg. 649
Philadelphia, PA 19112

2018 National Veterans Day Poster Contest

Calling all artists! The 2018 National Veterans Day Poster Contest is underway. Each year the Veterans Day National Committee publishes a commemorative Veterans Day poster. The poster is selected from artwork submitted by artists nationwide and is distributed to VA facilities, military installations around the world across cities and town in our nation. It also serves as the cover of the official program for the Veterans Day Observance at Arlington National Cemetery.



Over the years these posters have illustrated the rich history of our country's service men and women. The poster clearly reflects our pride and patriotism in saluting Veterans while providing the thematic artistry for the year.

2018 marks the Centennial Commemoration of the end of World War I on November 11, 1918. The theme for the 2018 Veterans Day Poster is: "The War to End All Wars".

To view examples of past winning submissions visit <http://www.va.gov/opa/vetsday/gallery.asp>.

The deadline for submissions is 1 April, 2018. The Veterans Day National Committee will convene a selection sub-committee in May 2018 to review submissions and make a final selection.

Questions? - contact the Veterans Day Coordinator at vetsday@va.gov.

[More Information](#)

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If you missed the January 3rd edition of the Newsgram [click here](#)

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