

## ACCA MISSION STATEMENT

It shall be the purpose of the American Correctional Chaplains Association [ACCA], an affiliate of the American Correctional Association [ACA], to:

- serve as a professional organization for pastoral care personnel in the corrections field,
- provide a network for sharing of information and resources amongst its members and with corrections administrators,
- formulate standards for chaplaincy and religious programming in correctional facilities,
- develop and implement certification for correctional chaplains,
  - advance the role of correctional chaplains, and
- communicate the religious and spiritual aspects of corrections to the larger community.



We proudly dedicate this brochure to **ACCA** member extraordinaire **Sister Margaret Granziano** of Lane County Adult Corrections in Eugene, Oregon, seen here as she becomes the first chaplain to ever receive the E.R. Cass Award, the corrections industry's highest honor, at the 133<sup>rd</sup> Congress of Correction in 2003.  
Photo: ACA Archives



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For more information and  
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[www.correctionalchaplains.org](http://www.correctionalchaplains.org)

## ***IF THEY'RE SO RELIGIOUS***



## ***HOW COME THEY'RE IN JAIL?***

A message from the

**AMERICAN CORRECTIONAL  
CHAPLAINS ASSOCIATION**

[www.correctionalchaplains.org](http://www.correctionalchaplains.org)

Of course, most inmates weren't all that ethically, morally or religiously observant before they were jailed and afforded the opportunities of correctional programs. Fortunately, however, in-custody and post-release religious programs are available to help offenders turn their lives around, to open the doors to them becoming productive, law-abiding citizens.



Members of the **American Correctional Chaplains Association [ACCA]** are privileged to serve as messengers in furthering this objective.

### THE ROLE OF THE PROFESSIONAL CORRECTIONAL CHAPLAIN

Much like our colleagues in the military and at hospitals, correctional chaplains provide pastoral care to those who are disconnected from the general community by certain circumstances – in this case, to those who are incarcerated. We also minister to facility staff members, their families and/or families of prisoners (as permitted by agency policy).



**Professional** correctional chaplains – such as those qualified by **ACCA's** certification process – are credentialed in Clinical Pastoral Education and other specialized training that enables them to effectively deal with the unique dynamics of corrections. As they also represent their individual faith communities, they are properly endorsed by bona fide religious adjudicatory bodies.

[www.correctionalchaplains.org](http://www.correctionalchaplains.org)

### AN OVERVIEW OF CHAPLAIN DUTIES

Many correctional agencies employ staff chaplains who serve as **religious programs managers**, insuring that all prisoners are able to access and practice the faiths of their choice. This requires extensive knowledge of the standards and practices of a diverse range of faiths and denominations therein, as well as policies and procedures that govern all aspects of the jail system. Some agencies also utilize faith-specific chaplains who only minister to those of their own denominational groups.

Staff chaplains are usually responsible for **religious volunteer recruitment, training, coordination and supervision**, working closely with representatives of the various faith communities to encourage community participation and insuring that volunteer activities are conducted in a diverse, yet secure manner.



Chaplains are the primary advisors on and implementers of **religious program policy**, clarifying issues involving various faith practices, religious articles, religious diets and other religious standards, insuring that these are permitted to fullest extent possible within usually restrictive jail environs.

Chaplains provide **pastoral counseling**, thereby affording opportunities for prisoners and others affected by the justice and corrections systems to dialogue openly about their concerns. This often includes



**notification** of death or other tragedy and **grief counseling** in such situations – particularly difficult tasks that require special sensitivity.



Chaplains perform **liturgical duties** for their own faith groups/denominations.

Chaplains contribute considerably to the **orderly operation** of jails by providing positive reinforcement and diffusing frustration, anger and stress amongst prisoners and staff, thereby lessening threats, assaults and other negative behaviors. They positively impact agency **finances** by resolving disputes, averting harm to individuals and damage to facilities and the lawsuits that may result from such occurrences and issues of religious rights.

Chaplains **represent** correctional agencies, particularly in matters of community liaison, advising other clergy and laypersons of jail-related matters and thereby raising the awareness of the larger religious and secular communities to the uniqueness of corrections issues.



**ACCA** is a **multi-faith organization** that was **established in 1885**.

Our **Code of Ethics** has been adopted by numerous correctional agencies as the official standard for their chaplaincies.