

“Can I call you, ‘Father?’”

In the State of Wisconsin where Kathleen and I reside, the Catholic Church historically has had the highest number of church adherents. In 2010, the last year for which such demographics are available, some 1.4 million Wisconsin residents held to this religious tradition. It explains why I encounter more Catholic patients in my hospice chaplain ministry than any other religious group.

Just last week for example, when I introduced myself to the family of a dying man, one member asked, “*Can I call you, Father?*” I confess, I’ve never been asked that before. However, the question brought to mind the words of the apostle Paul when he wrote to the church at Corinth,

*...For I became your **father** in Christ Jesus through the gospel” (1 Cor. 4:15 NKJV)*

Paul uses the familial term, “*father*” to picture the precious relationship that existed between him and the Corinthian believers. The apostle had been God’s glad instrument for communicating the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Corinthians—and they had believed. Thus Paul refers to himself as their “*...father in Christ Jesus through the gospel.*” To paraphrase, one could say Paul viewed the Corinthian believers in Jesus Christ as his ‘kids’ in the faith.

Similarly, should not this be our life’s ambition by God’s grace and enabling, to *father* ‘kids’ in the faith; to become a “*father in Christ Jesus through the gospel?*”

The Catholic honorific aside, it is my prayer that God would be pleased to use you and to use me as his instruments to convey the peace-making work of Jesus Christ to many. And if along the way someone calls us, “*Father,*” hopefully it will be, as with the apostle of old, for all the *right* reasons! ☺

As for the family member who asked if he could call me, “*Father,*” I simply replied, “Just call me Chaplain Paul.” That worked just fine. Indeed, he was not only open to hear the good news of the peace-making work of Jesus Christ, he wants to learn more.

Peace-At-Last Ministries Update:

Kathleen and I are in the process of establishing Peace-At-Last Ministries, a ministry whose objective is,

To teach, promote and demonstrate the peace-making work of Jesus Christ to people in their last stages of life—the terminally ill and hospice patients; to equip chaplains, ministry workers, caregivers, family members and the

bereaved with Biblically sound spiritual-care resources; and to make it financially possible for needy hospice patients to receive quality care in their final days.

These goals in mind, Peace-At-Last Ministries is applying to the Great Commission Foundation [www.gcfcanada.com] to become an Agent Organization both in Canada and the USA. We will advise when this process is complete and how you can contribute to our ministry support and projects with Peace-At-Last Ministries as God leads. Look for our next eGlimpse shortly; your continued prayers and gifts are deeply appreciated.

Hospice defined:

A common misconception is that “hospice” seeks to postpone or hasten death. In contrast, hospice actually seeks to improve the quality of life. As such, those involved in hospice care are committed to the principle that people deserve to live the last moments of their life in comfort, dignity and peace.

A grand privilege:

As hospice chaplain, my role is that of coming alongside hospice patients, their family members and care providers as they grapple with end-of-life realities. It is not unusual for people to try and make their own peace with God by a combination of prayers and religious rituals. Sadly, few know and enjoy the peace with God that Jesus made for them when he died on the cross. Thus it is my grand privilege to make God’s peace known —peace-at-last.

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13 NKJV)

Yours by God’s grace and for his glory,

Peace-At-Last Ministries



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