

Certification Committee Report Results of Survey and Recommendations

In October, 2009 49 survey letters to ordinaries in maritime (arch)dioceses went out and 70 survey letters to port chaplains went out. The results are as follows:

19 out of 49 ordinaries responded to the survey. That is 39% response.

Out of the 19 who responded:

12 said YES that is important to him that maritime chaplains and pastoral associates serving in his port(s) be certified through approved standards by the USCCB/Commission on Certification and Accreditation. **This is 64% of those responding.**

10 said YES that he would make certification mandatory and provide financial support to make it possible.

Comments beyond the questions were:

- certification for maritime chaplains only; not pastoral associates.(Q.1)
- I don't know. All depends on circumstances. (Q.2)
- Due to financial restraints on the diocese, I cannot provide any financial support.
- Does the school have to be two weeks? Verification of a priest in good standing vital.
- I do not have a useful opinion to offer.
- With qualifications. (Q.1) With availability (Q.2)

23 out of 70 port chaplains and pastoral associates responded to the survey. That is 33% response.

Out of the 23 who responded:

12 said YES that they think that it is important to have certification through USCCB/Commission on Certification and Accreditation to be a port chaplain/pastoral associate using standards and requirements issued by the Certification Committee of the AOS-USA. **This is 52 % of those responding.**

19 said YES they would make this a priority if we, the Certification Committee provide the means through standards and requirements.

12 said **YES** they thought their ordinary would provide funds to attend the Houston Maritime Ministry Training Program and the time off to attend if this were made mandatory.

Comments beyond the questions were:

- I am unable to attend as I am also priest in charge of Hispanic community, prison chaplain, and caretaker of my mother. I received excellent training at the International Seamen's House, of which the Diocese is a supporting member. I have been port chaplain since Oct. 2003
- School in February not good timing. Better May/June. Funds not a problem. Time is.
- I have so many other apostolates. I started doing this ministry because nobody else was doing it. I was already involved in Retrovaille, Marriage encounter, engaged encounter and Rachel's Hope. I'm 73 years old. If priest have to be certified to do AOS work there will be less priests doing it.
- It is important because it gives us professional recognition.
- Absolutely no financial support provided for this ministry. By the way, a self address stamped envelope would have been nice.
- Not important but thanks for asking.
- Should have just emailed this questionnaire and saved time and money.
- Chaplains are priests and certificates should reflect appropriate titles.
- I've been certified/recertified since 1990 and would like to keep my certification.

Committee Recommendation

Although the number of returns on the survey for ordinaries was less than we hoped for, the majority of those returning the surveys responded YES. In the same manner the number of returns on the surveys for port chaplains was much less than we hoped for but by a slim margin the majority of those who responded did respond YES.

This tells us that certification is important to some people. As long as there is still interest in this process we recommend that we stay the course, take Sr. Kay Sheskaitis' advice and reduce our standards to better meet the needs of our port chaplains to be certified, and continue our certification program.

Submitted by: Karen Parsons, chair, Deacon Glenn Teske and Rev. Rivers Patout- Certification Committee.