

The Cloak

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Beginning early in my forty-plus years of ministry, and on several occasions thereafter, I have been blessed to be known by the title “Chaplain.”

I first served one year as one of five denominational ministers/chaplains to students at the Memorial University, in St. John’s, NL.

Next, I would serve as sort of a “teaching chaplain” which occurred during my term as a Youth Ministries Director, again in Eastern NL. As such, I had the awesome privilege, along with a puppet friend of mine, to visit a number of the local, then integrated, elementary schools, assemblies on special holidays and the like, for three years.

I then returned to “M.U. N.” this time for a four year stint, proving to be a highlight of my career, and during which - one of the professors always called me “Padre.”

In more recent years I have been the Chaplain (Padre) to the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 66 in North York, along with a brief term as the Chaplain for the Toronto Police Service, 32 Division, also in North York.

In my days as an ordained minister I have been known by many other titles such as: *Cadet (pre-ordination), Lieutenant, Captain, and Major.* Attached to these ranks at various times came these adjectives: *Corps Officer, Divisional Youth Secretary, and Secretary for Candidates.* Lastly, I was the *Assistant Director of the Salvation Army Archives for the Canada and Bermuda Territory.*

Now, as the Coordinator of Spiritual and Religious Care for the IOOF Seniors Homes Inc., in Barrie, ON, I am excited to say, the moniker “**Chaplain**” is once again mine.

This may surprise you as much as it surprised me, but only recently I learned that the word “**chaplain**” comes from the Latin word for a “**cloak**.” The word grew out of the story of St Martin, meeting a man begging in the rain, with no cloak. If St Martin had met the man's need by giving him his own cloak he would have shifted the problem to himself, so instead, he tore his own cloak in two and shared it, half for the beggar and half for himself. From this the understanding of a “**chaplain**” as “*someone who shares support with those in the storms of life and offers some spiritual help and direction in those difficult times,*” was born. Of course, while this may be the original or core meaning of this title. I am very happy to know that a chaplain also shares in, and contributes to good times and celebrations as well.

And so, to all the residents and staff in my current setting, please know that I am available to you should you need me to “tear my coat,” sharing with you both in the storm and when the sun is shining!

“Chaplain Randy,” at your service.