DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
2000 NAVY PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20350-2000

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Happy Birthday Colleagues:

We celebrate our 225th birthday on 28 November. Looking back at our history prompts me to give thanks for God's providence and many blessings. Thank God for the transforming impact we made as schoolmasters, integrating the spiritual and ethical into education and training. Thank God for Chaplain George Jones, who influenced the establishment of the Naval Academy. Thank God for the chaplains who influenced Congress to outlaw flogging as a form of corporal punishment in the Navy and the Merchant Marines. Our history provides so many reasons for thanksgiving.

Our gratitude extends to those who gave their last full measure of devotion, both chaplains and those who support us. Thank God for Chaplains Thomas Kirkpatrick and Aloysius Schmitt, who perished during the attack on Pearl Harbor. Thank God for Chaplain Rentz, who gave away his life preserver so another Sailor might live and, confident in his eternal future, swam away. Thank God for Lance Corporal Chin and Chaplain Robert Brett, who died together at Khe Sanh, in Vietnam. Thank God for the courage and self-sacrificing love of Chaplain Capodanno. Thank God for so many others who manifested the greatest love, a willingness to die for others.

Thinking about those who died for freedom like our shipmates aboard USS COLE reminds me also to be grateful for those who live for our democratic ideals. Through the years, I continue to feel gratitude for those unheralded people whom we serve, whose courage, dedication, and spirituality dwarfs my own. These, like the flowers in Gray's "Elegy in a Country Churchyard," may sometimes blush unseen. But there is One who sees and records. It is God who has sustained us thus far on our way.

As you continue to labor to deliver innovative, life-transforming service to God's people, remember that the God who started you on this journey is able to get you to your destination.

Happy birthday colleagues. You stand in a heroic line of spiritual leaders in Blue and Gold. May God bless you, your loved ones, and your ministries.

Shalom,

Barry C. Black

BARRY C. BLACK
Rear Admiral, CHC, U.S. Navy
Chief of Chaplains