



# INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION of CIVIL AVIATION CHAPLAINS

## IACAC NEWSLETTER

March 2019

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

### **“In the midst of life we are in death.”**

Here’s a challenge for you to consider while you read this article (or scoot straight to the last few paragraphs, if you don’t want to read it all!) where **does** this verse come from? Old Testament? New Testament? Somewhere else?

This old familiar phrase came to me (as I’m sure it did to many) in the aftermath of the total loss of all 157 souls on board the Ethiopian Airways flight ET 302 from Addis Ababa’s Bole Airport to JKIA Nairobi on Sunday 10 March.

Perhaps most of us don’t know (I certainly didn’t until recently) that Ethiopian is one of the biggest carriers in Africa by fleet size (carrying 10.6 million passengers in 2018). It has tripled its passenger numbers over the past decade and is in the middle of a significant expansion, aiming to double its fleet by 2025 to 120 to secure its place as Africa’s biggest airline. A new terminal recently opened at Bole, tripling the airport’s size. Ethiopian has only recently started flying from here in Manchester. My IACAC Exec colleague, Pierre de Mareuil chose to fly with Ethiopian from CDG to our Board meeting in Nairobi (taking the route via Addis Ababa). Just over a week after returning from Nairobi myself, I have felt more than usually connected to this disaster, and to all our colleagues at JKIA and Wilson Airport in Nairobi

This was not a “two-bit” airline flying “on a wing and a prayer”, but a brand new aircraft (a Boeing 737 Max 8) flying from a new terminal, with experienced and skilled flight crew.

And this was not a small local incident, but a globally significant bereavement - as well as personal tragedy for the families, friends and colleagues of each person on board. Passengers and crew came from more than 30 nationalities. According to the airline, 32 Kenyans perished; 18 Canadians, nine Ethiopians, eight from Italy, from China and from the USA, seven from the UK and from France, six Egyptians, five from the Netherlands, four from India and from Slovakia, and three from Sweden and from Russia, with Germany, Austria, Spain, Israel, Morocco, Poland, Belgium, Nigeria, Indonesia, Serbia, Djibouti, Somalia, Uganda, Yemen, Sudan, Togo, and Mozambique also mourning the loss of citizens in the accident. The individual impact of such incidents was brought home in these few words: **“We’re just waiting for my mum,” said Wendy Otieno, clutching her phone and weeping.**

**“We’re just hoping she took a different flight or was delayed. She’s not picking up her phone.”**

Only five days later, the terrorist attack upon two Mosques at Friday prayers in New Zealand was to prove another globally significant bereavement. In response, New Zealand’s Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has given a strong lead to the rest of the world to take seriously the growing phenomenon of Islamophobic terrorist violence. Ardern was clear to characterise the shootings not as an attack on her country and her people, but as a symptom of a global trend that needs to be addressed: *“What New Zealand experienced here was violence brought against us by someone who grew up and learned their ideology somewhere else. If we want to make sure globally that we are a safe and tolerant and inclusive world we cannot think about this in terms of boundaries.”* As airport chaplains, we are among the goodly fellowship of global custodians of inter-religious engagement, and the way we encourage those of different faiths to encounter, engage with (and love) one another can make a significant difference.

[www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/03/christchurch-attacks-show-islamophobia-is-real-deadly-and-spreading-around-the-world](http://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/03/christchurch-attacks-show-islamophobia-is-real-deadly-and-spreading-around-the-world)

But even the UK even mainstream newspaper columnists are keen to tell us that the use of the term Islamophobia *“is a fiction used to shut down debate”* (Melanie Phillips in the (London) Times May 7, 2018). Whenever a human being is vilified, attacked or killed because of their religious faith, ethnicity, culture, sexuality, ability/disability, nationality; that is something that needs to be acknowledged and vigorously challenged. I’m grateful to New Zealand, a country that is apparently often missed off maps of the world ([www.bbc.com/news/av/magazine-41905040/the-country-that-keeps-getting-left-off-maps](http://www.bbc.com/news/av/magazine-41905040/the-country-that-keeps-getting-left-off-maps)) but whose leaders and population have responded to such an outrage with wisdom, compassion, and the moral and political leadership of a country a hundred times the size.

Islamophobia is abhorrent, antisemitism is abhorrent, all forms of hatred are abhorrent. The terrorist attack in Utrecht only three days later, on March 18, demonstrates the truth of the maxim (first articulated in the Canadian parliament in 1914, often attributed to Gandhi, and quoted most memorably in Joseph Stein’s screenplay for ‘Fiddler on the Roof’): **“(Villager) We should defend ourselves. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth”**

(Tevye): "Very good. And **that way, the whole world will be blind and toothless.**"

"*In the midst of life we are in death.*" – where **is** that phrase from? I don't know, though its meaning is all too real.

On Monday April 29 (the day following International Workers' Memorial Day Sunday April 28, 2019) staff in Manchester will gather in the Garden of Remembrance to recall with thanksgiving every member of our airport community who has died in the last twelve months. The youngest employee to die in post this past year was only 22. Sometimes we didn't get a chance to say goodbye. On at least one occasion, it was airport colleagues who (in the absence of family or neighbours) were the ones who nursed and cared for their friend and co-worker through his last days and nights.

I know that IWMD is observed around the globe. At Manchester airport it has grown thanks to the enthusiasm of Trade Unions and the support of Airport management – in enthusiastic partnership with the Chaplaincy. In many places the focus is on the safety, health and well-being of employees, challenging unsafe practices and sometimes flagrant health and safety violations. A motto of the IWMD movement is: "**Remember the dead, fight for the living**". That's a complex task. Meeting a manager at one of the construction sites at Manchester Airport last month, I was told that **six times** as many construction workers take their own lives than die as a result of workplace accidents. Therefore, the company has made it a huge focus of their work to support good mental health and staff relationships. Airports generally have outstanding safety records, and, with fewer industrial fatalities, it is good that we remember **all** who have died, in service or in retirement after years of service. If you'd be interested in seeing the order of service from last year's observance in Manchester, please – just ask, and if you have any you'd like to contribute, please share.

And finally, I was so sad to hear of the death of our friend and colleague Father Glenn O Connor of Indianapolis. Others have offered tributes to Fr Glenn, and would just like to offer my own. The first few days at my first IACAC conference in Atlanta in 2013 were (understandably) slightly overwhelming; lots of people who seemed to know everyone else, but on the first evening, after the opening ceremony, there were a number who had been at the end of the queue for the buffet reception who gathered in the hotel's restaurant to supplement their calorific intake – so I found myself at the same table as Father Glenn. To be in his presence was to experience the warm glow of humour, laughter, welcome and hospitality – all key to the life of a parish priest and an airport chaplain. May he rest in peace and rise in glory, and may God bring comfort to his family and his many friends and colleagues.

Well, back to those words: "*In the midst of life we are in death*" (in Latin: *Media vita in morte sumus*). Though a part of the Thomas Cranmer's English Prayer Book Burial Service (borrowed from fellow bishop Miles Coverdale's poetic rendering of Martin Luther's 1524, "Mytten wir ym leben synd"), the source is not the Bible, but seems to be from a battle song of 912 by

Notker the Stammerer, a monk of the Benedictine abbey of Saint Gallen in Switzerland. It formed the first line of a Gregorian chant for a New Year service in the 1300s.

From Switzerland, via Germany to England, and my own part of the world, the York Breviary, which used the words at (the monastic service of) Compline for the Fourth Sunday in Lent (Laetare ("*Rejoice*") Sunday). The words have also been sung as a hymn to ask for God's help in times of public need.



As March comes '*in like a lion and out like a lamb*' (though in the UK of the twenty-first century, the opposite is at least as likely to be true, with White (i.e. snowy) Easters outnumbering White Christmases in England this past decade!) Western Christians are mid-Lent (as I write), already looking forward to Easter, and there are a whole batch of Spring and New Year festivals in northern hemisphere (and autumn festivals in the southern).

To misquote a popular phrase from American fantasy drama HBO series: '*Spring is coming*' (to those in the Southern hemisphere... in about six months' time!). Lent is Christian season of fasting and penitence, but it originates simply as a preparation for the joyful celebrations of Jesus' resurrection. The Old English word "*lencten*" (Middle Dutch "*lentin*", Old High German "*lengizin*") means simply "the time of the lengthening of days and of growth in the natural world."

In the midst of Lent, and in the midst of many troubles across the world, and in the midst of personal sadness, History and Tradition call us to pray for peace and fullness of life for all; to witness to hope, and to model reconciliation between the peoples of the world (**and what better place to start than in the multi-faith prayer spaces of international airports?**):

*In the midst of life we are in death.  
Of whom may we seek for succour, but of thee,  
O Lord, who for our sins art justly displeased?  
Yet, O Lord God most holy, O Lord most  
mighty, O holy and most merciful Saviour,  
deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal  
death.*

Notker the Stammerer, 912 (?)

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### **WEBSITE & NEWSLETTER**

As announced at the Business Meeting in Charlotte last September we relaunched our website and are now running it on a different system. You might not only notice a completely new and modern design, but also a massive increase in loading speed. One of the main goals we achieved was to make the website fully responsive, which means it automatically adapts to the device you are accessing it from. This is important as an increasing number of visitors (already more than 50%) access our website from mobile devices.

The IACAC Board also decided to move the website to a new internet domain ([www.iacac.aero](http://www.iacac.aero)) – .aero domains are exclusively available to companies and organizations working in the aviation sector which makes them really unique. This also changed the email-addresses of the Board members which now end in .aero instead of .info. But don't worry – the old addresses will be forwarded for some time, so we will get your messages.

So far only the public section of the website is online. The "Members Only"-section, which will be much more useful than the one on the old website, is still under construction and will be available soon.

Another change that is ahead of us concerns the monthly newsletter. We are working on integrating the newsletter more with the website, which will result in a change of the newsletter layout starting from our next newsletter in April. It might happen that the first newsletter you get in the new format ends up in your spam folder – so please make sure you check this folder regularly and mark the newsletter as "no spam" if it ended up there.

"You do not need to sign up for the newsletter again on the new website; the subscription you made on the old website is going to remain active."

Rev. Stephan Pfenninger – IACAC Media Officer

### **IACAC MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS**

A reminder to all members of IACAC that their 2019 membership payment is now due. Membership dues can be paid through the IACAC website.

\$60 for Active Members

\$30 for Associate members

Access to the Members' Section of the website will be limited to those members who have paid their 2019 membership.

### **IACAC BOARD ELECTIONS**

At the 2019 Annual Business meeting to be held in Melbourne this October, elections will take place for a new President and Vice President of the IACAC. Nominations for the positions of both President and Vice President have been received from the Rev Pierre de Maureil from CDG Paris and the Rev Donna Mote from Atlanta. Only members who have paid their 2019 membership will be eligible to vote. Proxy and postal voting will be available for any financial member who is

unable to attend the conference but wishes to cast their vote. Details of how to apply for a postal or proxy vote will be published in the June Newsletter.

As only one nomination was received for the position of Treasurer and one nomination for the position of Media Officer, those nominated are elected unopposed.

Nominations will be received at the October Business Meeting for the position of secretary for election at the 2020 Annual Business Meeting. Our secretary, Mary Holloway, has indicated that she will not be seeking reelection.

### **AIRPORT CHAPLAINCY DOWN UNDER**

Airport chaplaincy has a long and varied history in Australia and New Zealand. The first chaplaincies began in Melbourne and Sydney as part of industrial mission then spread to the other airports around Australia and across the Tasman to Auckland and Christchurch in New Zealand. Since the early 1970's Australian airport chaplains have regularly attended IACAC conferences and played an active part in the Association hosting a total of five conferences to date. This year the October conference will be the sixth held in Australia and fifth in Melbourne.

Although airport chaplaincy was very active for many years, sadly as airports became privately managed, their chaplaincies became less active or ceased altogether. But since 2010 there has been a resurgence of chaplaincies around Australia. Both Sydney and Melbourne again have very active chaplaincies with full time chaplains, Hobart and Adelaide have a chaplaincy service on a regular basis, Launceston is searching for someone to take on the role and other airports are inquiring about the value of a chaplaincy service for them.

Australia is a multicultural country, in Victoria alone where the next conference will be, there are approximately 200 different nationalities, 130 different languages spoken and as many, or more, different faiths practised. It is a diverse mix of people all coming together to form their local communities. Australians together.

It is this diversity which we, as airport chaplains here in Australia, embrace. Our chaplaincies are inclusive and welcome everyone. Major Winton Knop described chaplaincy in Australia with these words;

*"Every day is different from another in the chaplaincy world at the Airport. You have no idea what is coming next. Some people might find such uncertainty and spontaneity a chore, tiring and even tough to face, yet the very nature of the airport explodes with diversity, the unexpected, a dynamic of service and engagement, just because of its very nature, its purpose...a launching and landing place for a huge community of people, every day."*

It is this diversity that set the theme for the IACAC October 2019 Conference in Melbourne. We are looking forward to welcoming chaplains to our beautiful country from all round the world. We hope to see you in Melbourne with us then.

## **IACAC CONFERENCE MELBOURNE**

Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> October-Friday 18<sup>th</sup> October

Conference Theme:

Diversity-Embracing Differences as a Gift

Conference Venue-



Best Western Airport Motel and Convention Centre

33 Ardlie Street  
Attwood, Victoria 3049  
Australia

Ph +61393332200

[www.airportmotelmelbourne.com.au](http://www.airportmotelmelbourne.com.au)

Conference Opening Ceremony- Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> October  
Annual Business Meeting - Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> October  
Gala Dinner - Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> October  
Delegates Depart after Breakfast-Friday 18<sup>th</sup> October

Cost - per person

Single- \$1100 AUD

Double/Twin Share - \$760 AUD

(Conversion rates on the 18<sup>th</sup> February  
Single \$758USD. £579, €662)

### **Post Conference Tour**

Five Days and four nights  
Friday 18<sup>th</sup> October- Tuesday  
22<sup>nd</sup> October

Touring the Great Ocean Road  
and Goldfields Area of Victoria



Cost per person

Single- \$990 AUD

Double/Twin Share - \$690 AUD

(Conversion rates on the 18<sup>th</sup> February-  
Single - \$683USD. £522, €596)

**NB** These conversion rates are only approximate and the rate can vary from day to day.

The conference and tour program is now on the website at [www.iacac.aero](http://www.iacac.aero).

Our Melbourne hosts have negotiated with the conference centre for the conference rate to apply to delegates arriving two nights before and for one night after the conference and the tour. These extra nights should be booked and paid for with your conference registration.

Bookings will open very soon. Registration and payment will all be through the website. Notification of the opening of registrations will be circulated to all on our mailing list.

**NEWS FROM OUR CHAPLAINCIES** On Friday 15<sup>th</sup> March Fr Glenn O'Connor from Indianapolis Airport,

passed into eternal glory. Fr Glenn has been a long time member of IACAC and hosted the 2001 Annual conference in Indianapolis. Many of our members sent messages of prayer and sympathy and all of these have been sent to Indianapolis to be given to his family. In the light of his recent very serious illness, the Rev Michael Banfield wrote this tribute to Fr Glenn.

*I would like to offer this tribute To Fr Glenn. I'm so sad to hear of his passing, from a human loss point of view - but can only rejoice for him. Having come so close to losing my own life recently, his death has touched me deeply.*

*"Roman Catholic priest and Indianapolis Airport Chaplain Fr Glenn O'Connor was a larger than life character. A man with a big heart, a hearty laugh, and an equal dedication to his parish and to the Airport which he served for so long as Chaplain, ably assisted by a small Chaplaincy Team.*

*My own memories of Fr Glenn centre upon the 2001 IACAC Conference, although I met him on many other occasions. That Conference nearly wasn't held at all, as three weeks earlier the USA had been stunned by the 9/11 attacks, and much of civil aviation was only just recovering. But we arrived for the Conference, and Fr Glenn plus the IACAC Board of that time ensured that we had a very memorable Conference. Chaplains world-wide shared experiences of 9/11 as it affected their Chaplaincies, and Fr Glenn ensured we visited the Speedway, had a turn on some go-karts, visited the Fedex freight depot on the Airport in the middle of the night, and I recall that he even arranged a session of karaoke - at which, somehow, he got Linda and I to sing "Puff, the magic dragon" - something we had never done previously, nor have since. Little of the main sessions input remains with me but what Fr Glenn achieved at that Conference does. Meeting him on later occasions, notably at an IACAC Board Meeting in Indianapolis, Fr Glenn was the same: generous of spirit, cheerful, dedicated, and humorous. I thank God for every remembrance of him."*

*Michael Banfield*

It was a great deal of shock and sadness that people in Australia learned of the terrible massacre of people at prayer in New Zealand. Australia and New Zealand are both neighbours and family as its citizens move freely between the two countries. On that dreadful day the chaplains in Melbourne were present for the arrival from and departure to Christchurch of all flights. They met with shocked family members rushing to Christchurch and comforted bewildered passengers who could not believe that such a thing had happened in their peaceful country. On Friday the 22<sup>nd</sup> March a time of reflection was held at the airport with a candle being lit for each person who had lost their life and a special prayer for tolerance, peace and compassion was read.

### **THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH**

Kind words are short but their echoes are endless