

Notes:

Sermon Text

Subject

Spiritual “To Do List”

(things God has shown me today)

"The prayer life that existed between those chaplains is something that existed long before the ship was attacked. They had become friends and were often at prayer together. That attitude of prayer brought them together in a way that will never be forgotten." — Rev. James F. Koenigsfeld

The Story of the Four Chaplains

A convoy of three ships and three escorting Coast Guard cutters passed through "torpedo alley" some 100 miles off the coast of Greenland at about 1 a.m. on February 3, 1943. The submarine U-223 fired three torpedoes, one of which hit the midsection of the *Dorchester*, a U.S. Army troopship with more than 900 men on board. Ammonia and oil were everywhere in the fast-sinking vessel and upon the freezing sea. The four Chaplains on board, two Protestant pastors, a Roman Catholic priest and a Jewish rabbi, were among the first on deck, calming the men and handing out life jackets. When they ran out, they took off their own and placed them on waiting soldiers without regard to faith or race.

Approximately 18 minutes after the explosion, the ship went down. The Chaplains were the last to be seen by witnesses; they were standing arm-in-arm on the hull of the ship as it went down, each praying in his own way for the care of the men. Almost 700 sailors and soldiers died also, making it the third largest loss at sea of its kind for the United States during World War II. The Coast Guard Cutter *Tampa* was able to escort the other freighters to Greenland. Meanwhile the cutters *Comanche* and *Escanaba*, disobeying orders to continue the search for the German U-Boat, stopped to rescue 230 men from the frigid waters that night.

The four Chaplains were Father John Washington (Roman Catholic), Reverend Clark Poling (Reformed), Rabbi Alexander Goode (Jewish) and Rev. George Fox (Methodist). These four Chaplains were posthumously honored by the Congress and President. They were recognized for their selfless acts of courage, compassion and faith. According to the First Sergeant on the ship, "They were always together, they carried their faith together." They demonstrated throughout the voyage and in their last moments, interfaith compassion in their relationship with the men and with each other.

Enter to Worship. Depart to Serve.

O LORD of hosts, happy is everyone who trusts in you.

Psalms 84:12

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