

**BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: THE REV. BABS M. MEAIRS, M.DIV., M.A., B.C.C.**

The Reverend Babs Marie Meairs is the Field Coordinator for the Office of the Bishop Suffragan for Federal Ministries (Chaplaincies). She represents Bishop George E. Packard at activities involving the recruiting, training, and supporting of chaplains as they minister in a variety of settings. The issues of military chaplains, their families, and ministry to Episcopalians assigned throughout the world are familiar to her. Many years in healthcare chaplaincy provide her with connections for persons interested in the Department of Veterans Affairs chaplaincy and diocesan chaplains seeking professional Board Certification. She speaks for the Episcopal Church as a faith group endorser at conferences of the Association of Professional Chaplains, the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, the Association of Religious Endorsing Bodies, and the National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces.

In 2007 Babs retired from being the Director of the Chaplain Service at the VA San Diego Healthcare System, one of the largest of the over 170 VA healthcare facilities. Her career in the VA included specialization in Spinal Cord Injury, rehabilitation medicine, Medical Ethics, and End of Life Issues. She served on the VA's national advisory team on palliative care and has presented at various venues on ethics, end of life care, and spirituality. She has received the VA Secretary's Hands and Heart Award and the national Award for Excellence in Chaplaincy for staff chaplain of the year.

As a VA chaplain trained in Critical Incident Stress Management and certified for Disaster Response through a VA and Red Cross program, Babs has served both Church and Nation. In September of 2001 she was called to New York as a member of Bishop Packard's 100 Days Support Mission following the terrorist attacks. With other chaplains and experienced responders she participated in the support of congregations dealing with unusual grief and stress.

While at the VA Medical Center in San Diego, Babs helped start a program for Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) that is a collaboration with the Navy Medical Center. The second of its kind in the VA, it serves to advance care of both active duty military personnel and veterans. Babs also served on the Professional Consultation Committee of the CPE program at the Center for Urban Ministries, connected with Episcopal Community Services.

Prior to her healthcare chaplaincy, Babs served in Episcopal parishes and as a fulltime teacher and chaplain at a large parish day school in Fort Worth, Texas. She was also a volunteer chaplain at the local Federal Correctional Institution. Her undergraduate work was in art and rhetoric at the University of California at Davis, and she earned her Master of Divinity at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific. She later completed a Master of Arts in Religious Studies at Texas Christian University. She was active in the American Academy of Religion, the National Association of Episcopal Schools, and later did post-graduate work in Worship and the Arts at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California.

Babs is a veteran of the United States Marine Corps, and served as Commanding Officer of the Women's Company at Quantico. She received the Joint Service Commendation Medal for her leadership on a Defense Department Special Project during the nation's Bicentennial. Being of the Vietnam era, combat issues and public response impacted her and her call to ministry. She participates now in local veterans activities as the local Marine Corps League chaplain, a member of the Women Marines Association, and on the Board of Directors for the Marine Corps Recruit Depot Historical Society. .

Babs credits the examples of her faithful Episcopal parents and the Four Chaplains of World War II fame as her inspiration for serving God and Country. She is married to the Rev. Edward Busch, M.D. Living in San Diego, they enjoy travel and an occasional round of golf. They have a grandson in the Army and two nephews in the Air Force. Care for military families continues to be both personal and vocational.