

U.S. House of Representatives Chaplain Speaks at School Meeting

March 29, 2019

Father Patrick Conroy, chaplain to the United States House of Representatives, spoke at a school meeting March 29 in the Irvine Memorial Chapel. A Jesuit priest, Father Conroy works with a group called *OwningOurFaith*, which has a goal of fostering dialogue and inclusion between the LGBTQ community and the Roman Catholic Church, both of which he will discuss at the school meeting.

Conroy also joined students for a brown-bag lunch and discussion following the school meeting.

“We’re so grateful to have father Conroy visit Mercersburg Academy,” said Rev. Will Whitmore, school minister at Mercersburg. “Father Conroy has the unique task of working with groups that we don’t often think of living harmoniously with one another. It is great to hear about the work he does both in the U.S. House of Representatives and also with *OwningOurFaith*.”

Conroy was born in Everett, Wash., graduated from Claremont McKenna College in 1972, and attended Gonzaga University Law School for one year before entering the Jesuit Order in 1973. As a Jesuit scholastic (seminarian), Conroy earned an M.A. in philosophy from Gonzaga, a J.D. from Saint Louis University, an M.Div. from the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley (Calif.), and an STM from Regis College of the University of Toronto in missiology.

He was ordained a priest in 1983 in Seattle, Wash. While training, Conroy practiced law for the Colville Confederated Tribes in Omak, Wash., representing tribal members in state courts. He represented Salvadoran refugees for the Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Immigration Office in San Francisco while studying theology and again worked for the Colville Tribes helping to develop the case for the tribes’ treaty fishing rights in the mid-1980s.

Following his ordination, Conroy served four villages on the Colville and Spokane Indian Reservations from 1984 to 1989. After a year of working for the national Jesuit Office of Social Ministries in Washington, D.C., he began a career of university chaplaincy, primarily directing student retreats at Georgetown University for four years, Seattle University for three years, and again at Georgetown for six and a half years.

In May of 2011, Conroy was nominated as the 60th Chaplain to U.S. House of Representatives by Speaker of the House John Boehner in consultation with Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, and was elected by the House and sworn in by the Speaker on May 25, 2011.

Conroy was a competitive runner in college and for a few years after, a recreational runner for many years, and continues to have an interest in remaining physically fit. He plays the

guitar, and especially through years of retreat work has learned how to lead sing-a-longs, favoring classic rock and roll.

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