

INVOCATION PRAYER FOR THE INAUGURAL DINNER OF KNIGHTS OUT
THE HUDSON ROOM OF THE WEST POINT CLUB, WEST POINT, NEW YORK

31 MARCH 2012

CH (1LT) CHRIS J. ANTAL

Inspired by the words of

CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT DAVID LEE GAINER
JUNE 12, 1948 – FEBRUARY 2, 2012

WE GATHER TOGETHER THIS EVENING ON THE BANKS OF THE MIGHTY HUDSON RIVER. This gathering, coming at the wake of the implementation of repeal, here in a state that has recently legalized same sex marriages, is truly a "holy moment in time!"

And the Hudson River calls to mind the words of Amos, who prophesized about some future day "when justice would roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream." This is that day the prophecy is fulfilled. *Let us rejoice and be glad in it.*

WE GATHER TOGETHER THIS EVENING AT WEST POINT: THE UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY. A place that stirs our souls with sacred oaths once made, and too often betrayed: Duty, Honor, Country; A cadet shall not lie, cheat or steal, nor tolerate those who do; Integrity: a core Army value. This is the day we reclaim these sacred oaths. *Let us rejoice and be glad in it.*

WE GATHER THIS EVENING IN GOOD COMPANY: MEMBERS OF KNIGHTS OUT, FRIENDS AND ALLIES. We give thanks to all who made this day possible. Yet our hearts grieve knowing that some of our LGBT patriots gathered here tonight were defined as unfit for military service. Some were dishonorably discharged. Some served by giving up their self identity and lying about who they are. Some were found out, and summarily fired. Too often while serving, with all of the weight of being part of a fighting force on their shoulders, they had no one to turn to for counsel nor pastoral care. I confess this evening: Some of these patriots were discharged after being "turned in" by their Chaplain - the very person who should have been a confidant, a counselor, a light, and a comfort. This is the day for us to let go of our grief, and bind our wounds. *Let us rejoice and be glad in it.*

WE GATHER THIS EVENING FILLED WITH HOPE, COURAGE AND COMMITMENT. May the repeal of the law and our gathering here tonight help restore integrity and honor to these brave men and women. May these patriots gathered here begin to breathe freely knowing that those who are serving have allies in the chaplain corps to which they can turn to and find the powerful presence of a loving, inclusive, accepting, living God. This is the day to celebrate our journey towards wholeness together: where we have come and where we are going. *Let us rejoice and be glad in it.*

God bless everyone who helped make this day happen and God bless America.