



Dillard University's Chaplain, Reverend Gail Bowman, has resigned from Fair Dillard. Her last day at Dillard will be Friday, May 18, 2012. Staff, faculty and students gathered in Lawless Chapel earlier in the week to bid her farewell and share how much she has meant to them. Reverend Bowman will begin a new position as Director of the Willis D. Weatherford, Jr. Campus Christian Center and College Chaplain at Berea College in Berea, Kentucky. Reverend Bowman has written a letter to the Dillard community, to address her departure.

Dear Dillard University Community--

So many questions have arisen regarding my departure I decided it was necessary and appropriate to speak up. Please know, first of all, that I was not 'forced out,' nor am I 'retiring.' I am going to another school, and let me explain why.

When I came to Dillard University in 1998 it was because I was quite sure I was called by God to be at Dillard. I was eager to be obedient in being where God asked me to be. There are not many who have been at Dillard long enough to remember, but I was considered a real outsider

when I first came. I knew and understood so little of what Dillard, and New Orleans, were about. What I liked, right away though, was the pride, the joy and the God-centeredness of the University. I fell in love with the students first and, before I knew it, I came to love the faculty and staff-- the whole community of 'Fair Dillard.' I will take my leave at the end of this week because I am still called to be where God asks me to be, and God now asks me to be at Berea College in Berea, Kentucky.

Students, faculty, staff and alumni of Dillard University, I have loved being your Chaplain. You have honored me by accepting my guidance and by requesting my prayers. Your trust has challenged me to examine The Word deliberately and daily, and to employ both care and courage in responding to difference among us. I have experienced the deepest and most profound blessing of Greater Than There Can Be None while journeying with you; I am forever grateful to God, and I am forever grateful to you.

Our office is putting together some suggestions on how our work might be continued and will leave those with Dr. Barnes-Teamer, who is our supervisor. We have little doubt, however, that Dr. Kimbrough will have some additional wisdom to add to this conversation when he arrives. It is good that he will have some freedom to reconfigure religious life at Dillard. He clearly understands the need to be thoughtful and prayerful in how we express and live our faith. The spirit of Dillard University is reinvigorated through our ability to welcome new people into our community and allow God to use them in our midst.

The spirit of Dillard University is enriched through our willingness to ask the best of ourselves in each present moment, and for each education-seeking young person who comes our way. Beloved, we are a grand manifestation and a holy celebration of the sustained faithfulness of Almighty God. May our words, our deeds and even our thoughts live up to that extraordinary awareness of Grace. God bless you always; you will continue in my prayers.

Gail E. Bowman (Rev.) University Chaplain

