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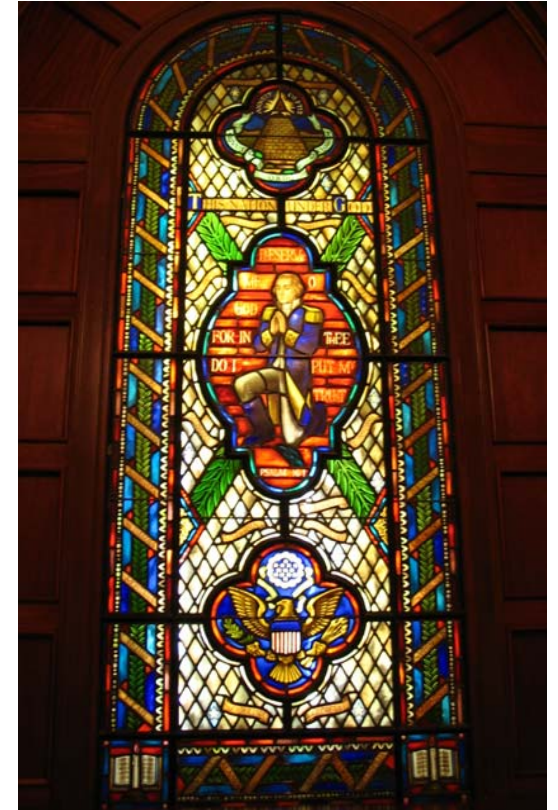
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# Office of the Chaplain



## U.S. House of Representatives

## Biography of Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin



Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin was born on November 8, 1934. After graduating from St. Mary of the Lake University, Mundelein, Illinois, with a Licentiate in Sacred Theology, he was ordained a priest of Chicago

on May 3, 1960. For the next five years he served as Associate Pastor for St. Raymond Parish in Mount Prospect, Illinois, before becoming Associate Pastor at Chicago's Holy Name Cathedral. In 1968 Father Coughlin received a degree in pastoral studies from Loyola University Chicago. The following year he was appointed the first director of the Office for Divine Worship. As director, he was responsible for supervising the implementation of the liturgical renewal called for by the Second Vatican Council in the parishes of the Archdiocese of Chicago.

In 1984 Father Coughlin took a year-long sabbatical, during which he studied Eastern and Western religions. For five months he lived with the Trappist monks of Gethsemani Abbey in Kentucky. He then worked with the Missionaries of Charity in Calcutta, India. The following year he served as scholar-in-residence at the Pontifical North American College, Rome, Italy.

From 1985 to 1990 Father Coughlin had pastoral duties at St. Francis Xavier Parish in La Grange, Illinois. He then became director of the Cardinal Stritch Retreat House in Mundelein, Illinois. In 1995 he began working as Vicar for Priests in personnel matters under Joseph Cardinal Bernardin and, later, under Francis Cardinal George.

When Speaker J. Dennis Hastert turned to Cardinal George as he searched for a new House Chaplain, one of the names proposed was Father Coughlin's. First interviewed on March 13, 2000, Father Daniel P. Coughlin was sworn in as the fifty-ninth Chaplain of the U.S. House of Representatives on March 23, 2000.



## Duties of the Chaplain

According to the rules of the House, it is the duty of the Chaplain to offer an opening prayer at the commencement of each day's session of the House. The Chaplain also coordinates the guest chaplain program, which allows Members to invite clergy from their districts to offer the official daily prayer. In addition, personal counsel and general pastoral services are extended to Members and their families and to staff. By addressing the concerns and questions common to all faith traditions, the Chaplain works to create a spiritual wellspring from which the entire congressional community can draw.



## History of the Chaplaincy

The history of the chaplaincy began in 1774, when the Continental Congress chose Episcopal Rector Jacob Duche to open its legislative sessions with prayer. In 1789 the First Congress chose Reverend William Lynn, a Presbyterian from Philadelphia, as the official Chaplain of the House. Each succeeding Congress has named a Chaplain, except the 34th to 36th Congresses (1855–1861), during which local clergy of Washington, DC, served as volunteer chaplains. In recent Supreme Court decisions, the constitutionality of the Chaplain's role has been upheld based on precedent and tradition.



## Ministries of the Chaplain's Office

Many resources are available for Members and staff who want to foster their spiritual lives while serving on Capitol Hill. Local groups sponsor numerous Bible studies, lecture series, and prayer groups, including:

- Members-only prayer breakfast
- Rosary prayer group
- Muslim congregational service
- Jewish Staff educational series

Other programs are added as interests and needs are recognized.



## Congressional Prayer Room

The Congressional Prayer Room (H-234, The Capitol) is a quiet place for Members of the House and the Senate to use for prayer and reflection. Established over 50 years ago, the prayer room houses a beautiful stained glass window of George Washington kneeling in prayer, surrounded by an inscription of Psalm 16:1: "Preserve me, O God, for in Thee do I put my trust." Also incorporated in the window are the names of all the states and both sides of the Great Seal of the United States. (This space is not open to tours or to visitors to the Capitol.)



## Prayer Requests

Chaplain Coughlin encourages everyone to pray daily by name for Members of Congress and House staff as they go about their legislative work for the country.

