

# **New Mexico Corrections Department**

Reverend Calvin Robinson, Senior Chaplain

Faith Based Coordinator

## ***RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IS A PRIVILEGE FOR ALL***

As Senior Chaplain, I have a strong conviction that Chaplains ensure that equitable and professional accommodations are done for all faith groups. When we carry out this legal responsibility, Chaplains show respect, correctional excellence and professional integrity to all faiths involved in our chapel and volunteer programs in our facilities throughout the state. Let us continue to fulfill this mandate with dedication.

As Chaplains, we are very well acquainted with the constitutional right of religious freedom enjoyed by all citizens of the United States. Our role as Chaplains is to ensure this religious freedom is afforded to every person in our care and custody. Every faith tradition that is authorized to congregate in our state prisons must be afforded the legal accommodation to practice their faith.

Religious freedom is not only a constitutional and legal right. It is also a personal right of conscience as it relates to our respective faith traditions. Every Chaplain serving in the NMCD represents your respective faith, traditions, and doctrinal understandings.

There are Chaplains employed at all of NMCD facilities, State and Private operated. It is the chaplain's responsibility to accommodate all faith traditions, our Chaplains are professionally endorsed with religious credentials of many faith traditions. Religious freedom means that all persons under the protection of NMCD have the freedom to appropriately express their faith. The Chaplains responsibilities at each facility, is to ensure that these rights are carried out according to each faith belief, the State and Federal Law and NMCD Policy. The religious freedoms of our residents are very important to each of them and NMCD in maintaining their identity, spiritual integrity and on-going spiritual formation of all faith tradition.

Let us move forward in the religious freedom we all are privileged to have with respect, civility, and professional courtesy toward all faith traditions. Lastly, our religious freedom in a prison setting must be tempered with compliance to State, Federal Law, RLUIPA, RFRA and NMCD Policy.