

Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio, J.C.D.
Episcopal Ordination of Bishop Robert J. Coyle
(Feast of St. Mark)



One of the principle characteristics of the magnificent Basilica of San Marco in Venice is the splendid mosaics, as well as, the marriage of several architectural styles. Mosaic provides a good image for the Archdiocese for the Military Services present throughout this Country and the world and embracing the five branches of the Armed Forces, the Veterans' Administration Medical Centers, and others in service to the federal Government outside our borders. Mosaic also describes well our interaction and shared chapel space with so many different faith groups.

"Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature." begins this second conclusion to the Gospel of Mark, which we have just heard. A scholar might object that this passage is from an author later than the Evangelist and should not be used on the Feast of St. Mark. However, we are in this beautiful crypt church in the American continent, because the Apostles heard and responded to that mandate from the Lord. They lived His charge and preached the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ and invited others to accept the gift of rebirth into eternal life. Fundamentally our ministry is a response to the challenge "to rediscover the journey of faith so as to shed ever clearer light on the joy and renewed enthusiasm of the encounter with Christ."¹

The Year of Faith offers us a unique opportunity to respond to "a summons to an authentic and renewed conversion to the Lord, the one Savior of the world."² Like the Apostles whose unworthy successors we are, we seek that personal conversion and then go forth to invite every person to meet the Lord Jesus and discover in Him the only path to the fullness of life. The feast of St. Mark reminds us of the importance of evangelization, the duty to announce the truth—regardless of the opposition, and the privilege to be sent forth to minister to the varied categories of people who belong to this personal Archdiocese.

¹ Pope Benedict XVI, *Porta Fidei*, 2.

² *Ibid.*

Very much like the Apostles, pastoral ministry in the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA, has the globe as its area of ministry. We are challenged with a shortage of priests, an abundant flock, and daunting distances. The addition of another Auxiliary Bishop will allow me to ensure a simpler episcopal presence and oversight to the entire Archdiocese entrusted to my pastoral care. Bishop-elect Coyle, I am grateful for your willingness to accept this ministry and to leave behind the familiar to embrace the nomadic task of pastoral visitation.

Your new area of responsibility in the Vicariate of the eastern half of the United States will include almost ninety installations. It will invite you to discover that the Country has more than an East and a West Coast. There is great richness in the middle! In a few moments I will hand you the crosier used by some of your predecessors. In the node you will find the seals of the Chaplain Corps of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Veterans Administration. It is a wonderful symbol of the breadth of the new responsibilities that will be yours. Traditionally seen as the shepherd's crook, the crosier will also be a pilgrim's staff and a symbolic sign of support as you begin your ministry on the move.

We have laughed that your youthfulness will lower the median age of the AMS active Bishops by three years. However, I can assure you that you will need the vigor and stamina of youth, the enthusiasm of a pastor, and the fire of the Spirit to accomplish the arduous task of bringing the Gospel to the women, men, and children we are privileged to serve. Draw strength from the grace of the fullness of the priesthood you are about to receive.

To paraphrase Pope Francis at his first Chrism Mass: be a shepherd "with the 'odor of the sheep', make it real," as a shepherd among the flock, a fisher of men and women. "...The so-called crisis of priestly identity threatens us all and adds to the broader cultural crisis; but if we can resist its onslaught, we will be able to put out in the name of the Lord and cast our nets. It is not a bad thing that reality itself forces us to "put out into the deep", where what we are by grace is clearly seen as pure grace, out into the deep of the contemporary world, where the only thing that counts is "unction" – not function – and the nets which overflow with fish are those cast solely in the name of the One in whom we have put our trust: Jesus."³

"For we do not preach ourselves but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your slaves for the sake of Jesus"⁴, Paul reminded us in the first reading. How important is that truth in an age where the vertical pronoun has usurped every available space. Today is an important day for you, dear Brother, and it is a very important day for this global Church. Fundamentally, however, its glimmer pales if we fail to keep ever present the One who called us and the One we preach, Jesus Christ, Whose Vicar has named you to this office.

It is His light that shows us the way. It is His truth that we preach whether in season or out of season, politically correct or grating to the self-appointed masters of our age,

³ Pope Francis, homily for the Chrism Mass, 28.IV.13.

⁴ 2Cor. 4:5.

whose tyranny is an absolute relativism. Pope Francis reminded the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See that “There cannot be true peace if everyone is his own criterion, if everyone can always claim exclusively his own rights, without at the same time caring for the good of others, of everyone, on the basis of the nature that unites every human being on this earth.”⁵

Indeed, St. Mark is the evangelist who makes mention that Jesus looked with love on the young man who would refuse His invitation to follow Him. That characteristic of His mercy is not lost on us as we seek to accomplish the mandate to go out to the whole world and tell the good news. We never forget that the good news has a unique and exclusive object: the person, the teaching, and the ministry of Jesus, only Messiah and truly the Son of God. So even when it is necessary to reprove, we do so with “all patience and sound teaching”.⁶

In a few moments I will place the Sacred Scriptures over your head as, along with the other bishops present here, I say the consecratory prayer. It is a reminder that you must be permeated with the Word of God so that you can effectively preach and teach that Word to those entrusted to your pastoral care. You are charged with the ministry to lead others to everlasting life. It is in word and sacrament that they will find the means to know, love, and serve Him alone.

The Successor of the Apostles is humble and recognizes that he has received everything from God. He is sober and alert so as to be vigilant. The rite of ordination urges you to “exhort the faithful to work with you in your apostolic labor; do not refuse to listen willingly to them.”⁷ Much of your ministry will be listening as you allow the soldier to tell his story, the veteran afflicted with PTSD relate what brought him to this point, or the Marine share her pride in the corps.

You will extend my fatherly care to the priests who, though on loan, are truly our responsibility and whose spiritual welfare is temporarily entrusted to us. Together we must build them up, encourage them to nourish their priesthood, and counsel them in difficult situations.

You will continue to interact with chaplains of other faith groups and you will “never relax your concern for those who are not yet gathered into the one fold of Christ; they too are entrusted to you in the Lord.”⁸

Even though you will have to insist on the unique care only a priest can offer to Catholic faithful, your deep love of the values and traditions of the Sea Services will be expanded by the rich heritage of the Army. Discover the soaring creativity of the Air Force. You will confirm “the unsung witness and vigilant service rendered by the Coast Guard, so often the first service to answer the call in moments of crisis. You will experience the spirited commitment of truly great men and women and you will tend to those Veterans

⁵ Pope Francis, Address to the Diplomatic Corps, 22.III.13.

⁶ Exhortation in the rite of ordination for a bishop.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

whose name is also your own. Your new “chaplaincy” will be as purple as the robes you now wear!”⁹

The role of a successor to the Apostles is not easy in our time. The fight for the freedom of conscience has reached our shores and we find ourselves on the front lines. Fidelity to the Gospel has a higher price and vigilance is necessary. While the assessment of one prelate that he expects his successor to die in prison might be hyperbole, we cannot be blind to the challenges of the present day. The ring that I am about to put on your finger recalls the perpetual fidelity of a man to his bride. Your bride, Rob, is the Church! Be faithful to her and illustrate her teachings eloquently and without fear. Your link may be to an ancient community of Zabensis—about which not much is known, but actually it is to the mosaic called the Archdiocese for the Military Services.

Serve that mosaic well as a faithful shepherd and co-worker in a vicariate of a global reality. Ensure that the cement which binds us together to make a beautiful image is Jesus Christ, the Savior of the World!

⁹ Timothy Broglio, Homily for the ordination of Bishop Buckon, 22.II.11.