

**Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio, J.C.D.**  
Chrism Mass, 2017



In 2001 the Abbot of Monte Casino invited a newly-ordained Archbishop to celebrate the Chrism Mass for the Abbey and its parishes. It was exciting to think about exercising a role that normally is not a part of the experience of most titular bishops and archbishops. In fact, I went to two Chrism Masses that year, because I also concelebrated the one in the Vatican Basilica at which St. John Paul II presided.

Both of those were celebrated for communities whose geographic dimensions are rather small. Today's celebration is for a faith community that spans the globe. The image of oil covering and permeating the expanses of the Archdiocese has to fill us with a sense of hope, a fervent desire to evangelize, and a recommitment to our vocations.

The hope is vivid, because we can say with Isaiah and the Lord Jesus that the spirit of the Lord is upon me and He has sent me to spread glad tidings to the poor. We have heard a call and we respond day in and day out—when it is convenient and not.

The recent vocation discernment retreat allowed me to touch once again the reality of the Lord's continued call to young men to come forward and minister. Their eagerness, their questions, their response, and their youth offer hope that the Church is alive and ready to move into the future.

Our vibrant faith communities and those eager to receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit also encourage our ministry. The harvest is abundant and we are renewed at the altar in the unique Eucharistic Sacrifice to go forth and bring in the harvest.

The mission is for all of us, ordained and laity. It is one reconfirmed at the end of each Mass when we are sent forth to fill the world with the good news we have heard. Take heart in that mission. We remember that, because we are a people of hope, we live different lives. Despite the pressures of secularism, the cult of me, and the materialism of our age, we can be faithful to Jesus Christ and we can live according to the demands of His Gospel message.

The message of Third Isaiah hits home, because he was sent to the poor and miserable, not as a social class, but as a religious group disparaged and consigned to the margins because of

their fidelity to the Lord. The prophet assures them that the Lord dwells in them. They are the temple which has not yet been reconstructed after the exile.

Our lives are privileged, because we see young men and women who sacrifice themselves for ideals, who stand the watch and man the guard posts to keep others safe, who study diligently, and stay fit in military academies and ROTC programs. They buttress our hope and they demand our good example and faithful witness.

They might be seen as analogous to the faithful remnant of the Old Testament who have an important role as the bearer of salvation. Or, joined with others they might be the signposts for the path to life without end.

There are many heroes—past and present. An interviewer asked me the other day in connection with the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the four chaplains next year what would I think one might have to tell people when the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary is celebrated. “Let us hope that it will be necessary to explain to them what war means,” I said. Oh would that we, daughters and sons of one loving Father, might learn to live in peace with each other and resolve conflicts without shedding blood. That, too, must be a part of our hope.

As Pope Francis has reminded us first in Bethlehem and then at Assisi last year: “All of us want peace. Many people build it day by day through small gestures and acts; many of them are suffering, yet patiently persevere in their efforts to be peacemakers.” “May we dedicate ourselves prayerfully and actively to banishing violence from our hearts, words and deeds, and to becoming nonviolent people and to building nonviolent communities that care for our common home. Nothing is impossible if we turn to God in prayer. Everyone can be an artisan of peace.”<sup>1</sup>

He also challenged each one of us as members of a priestly people to make a difference in our personal lives: “I ask God to help all of us to cultivate nonviolence in our most personal thoughts and values. May charity and nonviolence govern how we treat each other as individuals, within society and in international life.”<sup>2</sup>

We come here this evening to rejoice in the renewal of our commitment to be authentic ministers of the Gospel. Every now and again, I refresh the olive wood on this crosier with some olive oil. The oil penetrates, gives a new sheen to the symbol, and reminds me of the charge to shepherd a people given me by St. John Paul II. The cloth I use remains stained by the oil. You cannot wash it out. You and I must be that oil that renews and reinvigorates permanently. We must offer that anointing which cannot be erased or brushed away.

At the beginning of the millennium then Cardinal Ratzinger put his finger on a challenge to our age. He said: “The deepest poverty is the inability of joy, the tediousness of a life considered absurd and contradictory. This poverty is widespread today, in very different forms in the materially rich as well as the poor countries. The inability of joy presupposes and produces the inability to love, produces jealousy, avarice — all the defects that devastate the life of individuals and of the world.”<sup>3</sup>

All of us, priests, religious, seminarians, and faithful, young and less so, are charged by the Psalmist to express our confidence in the work of salvation accomplished by Christ in us. We are sent forth to make known and to allow others to experience the joy of the Gospel.

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<sup>1</sup> Pope Francis as cited in his Message for the World Day of Peace, 2017:7.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Address to Catechists and Religion Teachers, 12.XII.2000.

As Archbishop Vigneron admonished: “Someone has to teach our age about Jesus. And that then is the strategy of the Holy Spirit — to lead in the re-proposing of Jesus Christ. To bring those whom Christ loves face-to-face with Him. Because it is out of that face that His love shines. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to present Jesus as His most attractive. Jesus healing our wounds. Jesus forgiving our sins. Jesus standing with us in our trial. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to make Christ present in the power of His Love. To touch us with His anointing externally in the sacraments. To touch us in the anointing of our hearts and minds through His internal action.”<sup>4</sup>

The priests here this evening go forth renewed in their commitment to minister. We pray that the oil blessed and consecrated tonight might enliven the chapped skin of our hands; restore the spring in our step; and renew our commitment to Christ and His Church. At the beginning of Lent the Apostle told us that this is the acceptable time. It is always the acceptable time to make vibrant our commitment to preach the Gospel and to allow its rich message to drip on and penetrate every corner of the world.

“Indeed, my brothers, we rejoice because the Spirit of the Lord is upon us; He has anointed and sent us with His message of glad tidings. We rejoice in the ministry of our chaplains near and far. We rejoice in the presence of these representatives of our faithful and other religious and friends of the Archdiocese for the Military Services. We recommit ourselves to the service of the men and women in uniform, patients in the medical center of the Department of Veterans’ Affairs, their families, and those who serve abroad.”<sup>5</sup>

Beyond the confines of what was once the territorial abbey of Montecassino or the Diocese of Rome, to all the faithful of this global archdiocese we proclaim that this word ‘is fulfilled in your hearing’

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<sup>4</sup> Allen Vigneron, Homily for the Chrism Mass, 2.IV.15.

<sup>5</sup> Timothy Broglio, Chrism Mass Homily, 2008.