

**Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio**  
Chrism Mass 2025  
8 April 2025



My Brother Bishops and Priests,  
Reverend Deacons and Seminarians,  
Sisters and Brothers all,

A couple weeks after my episcopal ordination I traveled down to Monte Cassino, because the Abbot had invited me to preside at the Chrism Mass for that Abbacy Nullius, alas now striped of its parishes. It was a privilege and one that a nuncio does not generally have. As it turned out, I celebrated a few in the Dominican Republic due to illness or transfers of bishops. They served as a prelude to the 18 times I have celebrated this significant Mass for our global archdiocese.

The Word of God that we hear on this occasion calls us to focus on Jesus Christ, the Lord of history and the only hope for humanity—a good reflection in the midst of this Jubilee Year of hope. We gather as priests of Jesus Christ to renew our commitment to Him and His Church, to bless and consecrate the oils that will be used in the coming year, and to offer the hope announced in the first reading and the Gospel.

“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the one who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.” We cannot fail to remember that we preach this Lord and no other. The world may have many gods that compete for attention: money, the little machines that quickly dominate our lives, the cult of me and my pleasures, and the desire to dominate, to have power.

To quote Bishop Caggiano: “The world needs a clear, effective, unambiguous, zealous, courageous, reckless proclamation of the light. ...That is true for all of us in this church of every vocation, But as you and I, brothers, [anticipating the celebration of] the

day when the birth of our vocation was given to us, let us, you and I, together, brothers in Christ, make the pledge as we renew the promises of Priestly life that we will stand shoulder to shoulder as one brotherhood to help one another to peel away the twilight, wherever it threatens you and me to be able to live in the light.”<sup>1</sup>

There is no question that we have to speak the truth, as did Jesus, to a world that may not be anxious to hear. The life-giving word inspired by the Holy Spirit must be on our lips, reflected in our daily actions, and evident in our tireless ministry to our brothers and sisters. We cannot expect those who join us this night or those we serve in our assignments to listen to us or to support our programs if we are not consistent, authentic witnesses to the message we preach.

It must be in and out of season as the Sacred Scriptures remind us. Lately, people have gone out of their way to illustrate my errors in speaking in favor of caring for the migrant and welcoming the stranger. I have no creative response to justify my message. It is simply what St. Matthew wrote when he quoted the Lord Jesus: “I was a stranger and you welcomed me; hungry and you fed me; thirsty and you gave me to drink; naked and you clothed me.” In our quest to see the Lord, we have only to look there and we meet Him as He identifies with those most in need.

It is a part of the commitment that we, Your Excellencies and Reverend Fathers, renew this evening. We preach the message of the Gospel in word and in deed. We encourage our sisters and brothers in their responsibility to give witness to that message of hope.

The role is certainly a privilege, but it also bears a certain cost. In the words of Catherine de Hueck Doherty: people chosen by God very specifically and uniquely “appear to be especially big grains of wheat. They will feel more deeply the weight of the grinding stone. They also will be larger, more luscious grapes and they will suffer more from the winepress, but they will contribute more flour and more wine for the Sacrifice, provided they allow themselves to be guided by the Holy Spirit and the will of the Father.”<sup>2</sup>

We offer that participation in the Cross on our part this evening of blessing and renewal. The times might challenge our commitment, the weight of years might stoop our shoulders, illness might lessen the ability to meet every expectation, and price of sacrifice a bit more than I expected. Yet we remember that the eagerness of our response to the Lord’s call, the joy of going to His altar, and the constancy of His loving support.

We celebrate that constancy this night and we rejoice in the presence of the people of the Lord and the sight of reinforcement in the seminarians and transitional deacons. The Body of Christ is made up of many members and all work together to serve Him. The Lord was animated when he quoted the Prophet Isaiah in the Synagogue of Nazareth. He knew what lay ahead, but He also accepted the mission from the Father with enthusiasm.

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<sup>1</sup> Frank Caggiano, Chrism Mass Homily, 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Catherine deHueck Doherty as quoted in *Magnificat* March 2025, p. 144.

Pope Francis in calling this Holy Year held out the experience of hope for all of us: “By His perennial presence in the life of the pilgrim Church, the Holy Spirit illumines all believers with the light of hope. He keeps that light burning, like an ever-burning lamp, to sustain and invigorate our lives. Christian hope does not deceive or disappoint because it is grounded in the certainty that nothing and no one may ever separate us from God’s love.”<sup>3</sup>

The whole Body of Christ is invigorated with this virtue that inspires confidence in the presence of God in all that we do—not matter how ordinary or banal it might seem. “In that great drama, the Lord Jesus allows the light to be victorious, to shine not just in the tomb, but in every moment of His grace, in every moment of the ages to come until the light is alone what exists. And the darkness, and he who creates it is cast into the abyss forever.”<sup>4</sup>

So these oils will be blessed to initiate neophytes into the community of faith and to sustain those who are seriously ill in mind or body, undergoing surgery, or near the end of the journey. Chrism is mixed and consecrated so that infants can be anointed, young and others confirmed in the fullness of the Holy Spirit, things consecrated, and a new bishop be ordained. These are all signs of hope, because they tell us that the Lord is present, guiding His Body, and supporting us on the pilgrimage of life, which leads to His presence and rest in Him.

Actually, this crypt is lovelier than the more modern church where I celebrated the Chrism Mass for the first time. The monks of Montecassino would descend from their beautiful rebuilt monastery to one of the parishes to make it easier for the faithful to participate in that event. However, any setting is a good one to renew a commitment, bless, and rekindle hope for the days ahead.

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<sup>3</sup> Pope Francis, *Spes non Confundit*, 3.

<sup>4</sup> Caggiano, *op. cit.*