

Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio, J.C.D.  
Homily for the Installation Mass  
(25.I.08)



Praised be Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

Let my first words to you be the name of Our Lord. You may not remember anything else I have to say this afternoon, dear brothers and sisters, but please do not forget that I began with His holy Name, I intend to preach His Gospel among you, because it is truth and life. I intend to make His liberating truth the center of the ministry I formally begin in this magnificent Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

One of the last works of the great Renaissance artist Michelangelo is found in the Pauline Chapel in the Vatican Palace, not too far from the office where I spent eleven years in the Secretariat of State. The fresco depicts the scene described in the first reading, the conversion of St. Paul. The artist very cleverly used light to convey the presence of Christ. Paul, blinded by the light, is on the ground. We can easily imagine his confusion and uncertainty. We know about the perplexity of the others who will hear about this event.

Looking for that brilliant light of Christ as we celebrate the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul in the context of this Installation Ceremony, the Lord speaks to us about the mission of an Apostle, audacity, and Evangelization.

St. Paul in another of the accounts of his conversion, asks "What must I do, Lord?". It is almost Luke's simple summary of Paul's conversion. Having submitted himself to Christ, the faithful Christian's desire consists essentially in the profound willingness is to conform his life completely to will and plan of the Risen Lord. Paul becomes a missionary, a witness to the marvels he has experienced, "a witness before all to what you have seen and heard." So compelled by his experience of Christ, it is the only thing he can do. To meet Jesus Christ is to discover that I cannot live without Him and must enter more deeply into the mystery of His life and love.

Conversion is obviously the dramatic moment in Paul's life and a turning point in the history of Christianity, but is also the common experience of each one

of us. We must continually allow divine grace to form us, to convert us, to purify us into a perfect offering acceptable to the Lord. As the Psalmist says we must be continually refined as is fine silver.

Paul's itinerary of faith calls to mind our own. Our belief is not primarily in a doctrine, a formula or a system, but in a person, the Lord Jesus who reveals Himself to us. "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" reminds us that Jesus has identified Himself with the Church, the People of God.

Growing in knowledge and love of Christ urges a person to share what he has received. The Bishops gathered at Aparecida to celebrate the V Conference of the Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean reminded us: to know Christ is the greatest gift we have received and to share that experience is the most priceless treasure we can transmit.

Pope Benedict also insisted in the importance of evangelization. "Those who have recognized a great truth or discovered a great joy have to pass it on; they absolutely cannot keep it to themselves. These great gifts are never intended for only one person. In Jesus Christ a great light emerged for us, *the* great Light: we cannot put it under a bushel basket, we must set it on a lamp stand so that it will give light to all who are in the house (cf. Mt 5: 15). St Paul traveled tirelessly, taking the Gospel with him. He even felt under a sort of "compulsion" to proclaim the Gospel (cf. I Cor 9: 16) - not so much out of concern for the salvation of the single non-baptized person who had not yet been reached by the Gospel, but rather because he was aware that history as a whole could not attain fulfillment until the Gospel had reached the full number (*pléroma*) of Gentiles (cf. Rom 11: 25). To reach its completion, history needs the proclamation of the Good News to all peoples, to all men and women (cf. Mk 13: 10)."<sup>1</sup>

Evangelization is central to our faith. For that very reason every Celebration of the Eucharist terminates with a mission, a sending forth, and a mandate to go out with the good news. It is the mandate, repeated in the Gospel today, that requests submission and expects obedience.

Paul tells Timothy: "Do not be ashamed of your testimony to our Lord. Avail yourself of the strength that comes from God." This Timothy always tries to take that teaching to heart. The Word of God is not necessarily politically correct. Paul describes it as a sword which reaches the heart of the matter. Indeed, he also tells us to preach the Gospel in and out of season. It is a challenge and yet with every challenge comes the grace to meet it.

Speaking of challenges, the Holy Father has placed one on my shoulders and I have pledged to guard this rich trust with the help of the Holy Spirit that dwells within us. Receiving this mission from Almighty God who has called us according to His own

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<sup>1</sup> Benedict XVI to the Roman Curia, 21.XII.07.

design, I accept the challenge and will do everything in my power to teach, govern and sanctify, as a Pastor according to the Heart of Christ.

In the time since my appointment many have asked about past military experience in my back round. As you can see from the brief notes printed in the back of your program, there is none. While I recognize the new and specialized ministry to which I have been called, the Holy Father's task was to provide a pastor. I offer you almost thirty-two years of ordained ministerial experience, from the Nigerian bush in Udi parish where I served as a deacon without the benefit of electricity, hot water, or a common language to my most recent service in the beautiful islands of the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico.

The Servant of God, Pope John Paul II in his Letter appointing me to the Titular See of Amiternum and Apostolic Nuncio to the Dominican Republic and Delegate to Puerto Rico, reminded me that as one who grew up among those charged with health care, I would learn to spread the healing words of salvation among others. I promise to keep learning.

However, this is neither the time nor the place to offer pastoral plans or philosophies of ministry. It is a time to celebrate a new beginning, to beg Almighty God for the gifts of wisdom, fortitude, and patience. As we prepare for the Pauline Year, which our Holy Father has promulgated to begin next June 28<sup>th</sup>, I thought it appropriate to inaugurate my ministry to the Archdiocese for the Military Services on the Feast of his conversion. It also seemed appropriate, because while Paul might or might not have fallen off a horse on his way to Damascus, I will certainly spend a considerable amount of time in airports and in transit. He was a great missionary to the nations and this new ministry obliges me to go and seek out our faithful men and women in the Armed Forces and their families wherever they may be.

I promise to offer the best that I have to the faithful who have been entrusted to my pastoral care. Our thoughts cannot fail to turn this afternoon to the thousands of young men and women who unselfishly serve our Nation and many other Nations with their faithful vigilance. Iraq and Afghanistan are the places which immediately come to mind. We offer our prayers for them and beg Almighty God to bring them home safely. We thank them for their commitment and sacrifice.

Can we forget the wounded and those suffering in our hospitals, in the centers under the Veterans' Administrations, and elsewhere? Men and women who have sacrificed themselves for values in which they believe have given their youth and often their health and their lives in the service of our country. As Pastor now to many of them, I offer an expression of heartfelt gratitude, a promise of service, and the assurance of my prayers.

My expression of gratitude begins, of course, with Almighty God who gave me life, called me to the priesthood and has now entrusted me with a new responsibility.

So also, do I thank His Holiness Pope Benedict for his confidence in me. I would ask His Excellency, Archbishop Pietro Sambi to express in the usual way my appreciation to the Holy Father. I also am grateful for your presence – not only to fulfil your canonical duties, but also as a representative of a service to which I gave so many years of my life.

I am so deeply grateful for the presence of Their Eminences Cardinal Luis Aponte Martinez, William Baum and William Keeler. My association with each one of you goes back many years and holds special memories.

Archbishop O'Brien, I appreciate your sacrifice to be here this afternoon. When I met you thirty-two years ago, I was impressed, but I never, ever, expected to succeed you. I am grateful for the legacy you have left, the ministry you so ably accomplished, and the home that you provided for the Archdiocese. I hope to follow the example of your ubiquity and selflessness in generous service. Given that Baltimore is not far away, I am also counting on your counsel.

Así también saludo muy cordialmente mis hermanos Arzobispos y Obispos de la Republica Dominicana y Puerto Rico. Su presencia aquí es un signo de comunión particularmente fuerte. Durante casi siete años Ustedes me han inspirado con su compromiso, su cercanía a la gente y su fidelidad a la Sede Apostólica indignamente representada por un servidor. Me han enseñado la disponibilidad pastoral que caracteriza el ministerio de Ustedes. De manera muy especial renuevo mi gratitud al Cardenal Aponte por su presencia. A los Señores Arzobispos González y de la Rosa y los Señores Obispos Casiano, Camilo, Peña, Ozoria, Rubén González y Lázaro, habrá mucho para decir, pero tal vez la hermandad que Ustedes han siempre mostrada tiene su elocuencia más evidente aquí en su presencia.

En sus personas veo la presencia también de los nobles pueblos de ambas islas. Nunca puedo olvidar la bondad, la acogida y la fe de esta gente. Nunca puedo olvidar el calor y la emoción con que me han despedido. Espero que no fuera por la alegría de verme salir por fin.

Junto a Ustedes, pienso a los muchos militares de los Estados Unidos de América de habla español. Tengo mucho interés en servir a Ustedes. Después de haber pasado muchos años viviendo en el extranjero y hablando otros idiomas, se cuanto es importante hablar sobre la fe en tu propia lengua. Estoy muy dispuesto en ofrecerles esta posibilidad y orgulloso de su contribución al País. Su servicio es una contribución honrada y se que viene a un precio muy caro.

No olvido tampoco a los Embajadores y Diplomáticos presentes. Hasta domingo pasado comparti su oficio y les pido seguir trabajado para el dialogo y el entendimiento entre los pueblos. Saludo con cariño al Sr. Embajador de la Republica Dominicana y los demás presentes.

I am grateful for the Bishops who have so graciously taken time out of their schedules to join me in invoking Almighty God's blessing on this new endeavor. In the same way, I thank the chaplains, priests, and deacons who are here today. Allow me to single out the presbyterate from which I came. The priests of the Cleveland diocese had such an important role in my vocation, formation, and growth as a priest. While most of those here today are contemporaries or younger, they do represent all who form that wonderful communion of service in Northeastern Ohio. By the same token, I am grateful to the members of the Class of 1977 from the North American College who are able to be present today and remember those who have died.

There are also a few couples here from the first parish where I was an Associate Pastor. Twenty-nine years have passed since I left St. Margaret Mary, but the goodness of those people who broke me in is still one of the richest memories of my ministry. Thank you for being here today.

On this day of the culmination of the prayer for Christian Unity, I greet with warmth the Chiefs of Chaplains and the Chaplains from other Christian Communities of Faith present this afternoon. In the same way, I salute with respect our Jewish brothers and sisters and the Iman from the Islamic Faith. May all of us who invoke the name of the same Almighty and wonderful God teach respect, tolerance, and common values to all people.

I welcome the presence of the Honorable Justice Anton Scalia and the other representatives of the Executive, Judicial, and Legislative Branches of our Government.

The presence of so many members of the Armed Services is a source of special joy. I am anxious to begin my ministry to you and I hope that the orientation will not be too painful for either you or me.

Allow me to return to my priests, the Chaplains here present, those who are listening to the broadcast on the Eternal Word Network, and those who will read these words later on. I appreciate your service and recognize the sacrifice you are making. Please know that my door will always be open to you. As the first collaborators of the Archdiocese, your role is essential to the proclamation of the Gospel and the spiritual assistance of the men and women in uniform and their families. Your new Archbishop is always ready to help you in that ministry.

In the same way, I am grateful to Bishop Higgins for his leadership during the interim and to Bishop Estabrook for his constant travels. Msgrs. Dixon and Newland and Fathers Olszyk and Chandler have made me very welcome in a new home. The entire staff of the Archdiocese for the Military Services has been very helpful. They reintroduced me to cold weather last Tuesday during the March for Life, but have been very warm in their welcome.

Last, but certainly not least, I thank Joan, Tony, Larry, and John, their spouses, children, and grandchildren, my cousins, and other friends present here today. I am

glad that I will be closer and no longer need a passport to visit you. My siblings have been especially faithful in visiting me and participating in various events. The five of us cannot fail to remember our dear parents whose love and example are the foundation of who we are today. I believe in the communion of saints and I am certain that they are close to us today. May they rest in ever lasting peace.

My first words were in praise of Our Lord and Savior who has convoked us today. I do promise to preach His Gospel without fear in your midst. Pope Benedict reminds us that “the encounter with Jesus Christ requires listening, requires a response in prayer and in putting into practice what he tells us. By getting to know Christ we come to know God, and it is only by starting from God that we understand man and the world, a world that would otherwise remain a nonsensical question.”<sup>2</sup>

In this marvellous Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, I beg Mary, our Mother, to guide me on the sure path to her Son. My Episcopal Coat of Arms has a star to honor the Immaculate Conception, Patroness of the North American College where I was ordained deacon and priest and Patroness of this great Nation formed under God with liberty and justice for all. With the help of Jesus and Mary, let us all recommit ourselves to witness to the Gospel and, like Michelangelo offer a masterpiece to Almighty God – not one in plaster and paint, but in our lives.

Timothy, Paul, Andrew: two Apostles and the disciple – all great men fired with the experience of the Risen Lord and zealous in preaching. This Timothy Paul Andrew knows all too well his shortcomings, but I do share their zeal and am eager like them to serve and praise Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

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