



ARCHDIOCESE FOR THE MILITARY SERVICES, USA  
The Most Reverend Timothy P. Broglio

23 April 2015

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

“The harvest is good but laborers are scarce. Beg the harvest master to send out laborers to gather his harvest.” (Mt. 9:37b-38) Few times does the Lord tell us explicitly what our role in the future of the community of the faith is, but He does so in this passage.

As faith communities in the Archdiocese for the Military Services we are continually challenged by the shortage of priests to serve the people of God. Many installations are dependent on local clergy and all of us are very grateful for the contribution they are making. Some installations have no Catholic program at all. Priests are busy as they respond generously to genuine pastoral needs.

At the same time, communities served by the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA, are the single largest source of priestly vocations in the country. The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University reports that at least 6% of the men being ordained to the priesthood in 2015 are prior service. Sixteen percent reported that one or both parents had a military career.

Archdiocesan Vocation Director, Father Aidan Logan, O.C.S.O., believes that the number could be higher, because only 69% of the 595 men being ordained this year responded to the survey.

It is significant that at a time when only 0.5% of the Nation’s population serves in the Armed Forces, so many of those to be ordained come from military families or have worn the uniform of one branch of service or another. These statistics are even more incredible when you consider the tremendous shortage of Catholic priests in the military.

Good Shepherd Sunday urges you and me to redouble our efforts to assure an increase in the number of active-duty chaplains and those in the medical centers of the Department for Veterans Affairs.

Concretely, I invite you to encourage your children and the young people in your military communities to consider a vocation to the priesthood, the religious, or consecrated life. You never know when a word of encouragement, a question, or a thoughtful reflection might be the catalyst that a young person needs.

I ask priests in military settings to serve as assistant vocation directors. Look at the congregations you are pleased to serve and identify any prospective vocations. Ask them to listen for the Lord's voice and consider His eventual invitation.

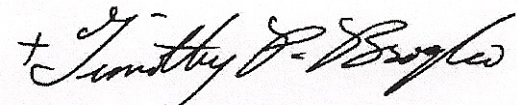
Lay ministry is part and parcel of our baptismal commitment. The overwhelming contribution of the laity is what keeps our communities alive, but without the specific ministry of priests who celebrate the Eucharist, forgive sins, and anoint the infirm, we cannot exist as the Catholic Church. Consequently, a specific prayer is important and it must be constant.

Therefore, I am mandating that there be a petition for vocations to the priesthood, religious or consecrated life at all Masses celebrated on military installations and at VA medical centers. This should be a specific petition for these important roles in the faith community.

That same specific prayer is already offered at all public Masses celebrated here in the Edwin Cardinal O'Brien Pastoral Center. We are most alive and most in communion when we gather around the Lord's table to celebrate the Eucharist. We are faithful when we listen to the Lord's advice to us and put it into practice.

Grateful in advance for your positive response to this letter, I remain

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Timothy P. Broglio". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

(Most Reverend) Timothy P. Broglio  
Archbishop for the Military Services

This letter is to be read at all Masses celebrated in the jurisdiction of the AMS on the weekend of 25-26 April.