



Serving those who Serve

Dear Friend in Christ,

The mission of the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA (AMS) is “*Serving those who Serve.*” The ministry of the AMS is to meet the spiritual needs of Catholics who are serving—or have served—our Country at home and abroad.

The AMS is the only archdiocese, or non-profit organization, that provides the Catholic Church’s full range of pastoral ministries and spiritual services specifically to Catholics serving in the United States Armed Forces, enrolled in U.S. Military Academies, undergoing treatment at any of the 153 Department of Veterans Affairs’ Medical Centers, working in civilian jobs for the federal government beyond U.S. borders, and the families of these populations. Programs and services vital to the unique mission and ministry of the Archdiocese include *Vocations*, pastoral visitation, endorsement of chaplains, *Evangelization and Catechesis*, *Sacramental Records*, *Tribunal*, and *Veterans Affairs*.

You more than most know that the greatest resource of the AMS is represented by the priests endorsed for service as chaplains. They are the front-line spiritual envoys who provide you and your loved ones access to the sacraments, spiritual counseling, evangelization and catechesis, and other forms of pastoral care. Last year, Pope Francis told military ordinaries from around the world that “The role of military chaplains is to accompany and support [those in need] on the journey, to be a comforting and brotherly presence for them all.” (Pope Francis, Address to participants in the 8th Humanitarian Course, 26 October 2015.)

Catholics constitute the largest faith group of the 244 religious communities recognized by the U.S. Armed Forces, approximately 25%, while only 8% of military chaplains are Catholic. The AMS receives no funding from the U.S. Government or the U.S. Military in support of its ministry and related programs and services. The AMS relies solely on private donations and the generosity of the Catholic community. The Government is reducing the size of the U.S. Military while the world situation, as we have repeatedly and dramatically witnessed both at home and abroad, underscores the need for a strong military. It is imperative that you, the Catholic faithful—who defend our Country and our religious freedom, do not have to sacrifice yours.

I am grateful to my brother Bishops for approving a special triennial collection to benefit the AMS in November 2012. The first National Collection was timed to coincide with Veterans Day November 2013 and raised more than \$8,239,000. The second National Collection for the AMS is being taken in dioceses and parishes across the country in 2016, for most at Masses the weekend of 5-6 November, or as otherwise determined by an individual diocese or parish. While second collections are not allowed in U.S. military chapels, military personnel and their families have the opportunity to contribute independently by sending individual donations to the **Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA Appeal or making a gift online at www.milarch.org/AMSAppeal**.

Please take one of the “Welcome Home” brochures to learn more about the AMS, what it does, and how it can better serve you as you serve our Country. Know that the staff at the Edwin Cardinal O’Brien Pastoral Center in Washington, D.C., stands ready to assist you and your family in living your Catholic faith.

Thank you for your service. Be assured of my continued prayers for you and your loved ones.

Invoking the blessing of Almighty God upon you, I remain

Sincerely in Christ,



(The Most Reverend) Timothy P. Broglio, J.C.D.
Archbishop for the Military Services, USA

**COLLECTION FOR THE
ARCHDIOCESE FOR THE MILITARY SERVICES, USA**



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Programs and Services of the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA (AMS)

Vocations

The AMS Office of Vocations informs and supports men exploring a priestly vocation and provides opportunities for vocation awareness and discernment with a focus on the military chaplaincy. The Co-Sponsored Seminarian Program is a partnership between the AMS and local dioceses and religious communities around the country. Through the Co-Sponsored Seminarian Program, a seminarian studying for a diocese in the U.S. and interested in the military chaplaincy is “co-sponsored” by the AMS. This means that the AMS assumes one-half of the seminarian’s formation costs. Three years after his ordination, following three years of pastoral service in his home diocese, the priest will begin ministry in the branch of the Armed Forces that he has chosen. The Church is relying on the AMS Co-Sponsored Seminarian Program to provide priests for home dioceses and the military chaplaincy.

The AMS currently partners with 23 dioceses across the U.S. As many as 38 co-sponsored seminarians are expected to be studying in 19 seminaries across the country in fall 2016. In 2016, there were three priestly ordinations and two diaconate ordinations. Twelve priests are currently serving as priests in their home dioceses before they will begin ministry as active-duty military chaplains. In 2015, three new co-sponsored priests joined a branch of the military. Since 2008, 21 priests have been ordained through the Co-Sponsored Seminarian Program. In addition, over fifty priests and seminarians, surfaced through AMS vocation programs—are now serving or preparing for ministry in their dioceses or religious communities.

Annually, the AMS average cost per seminarian is \$18,000. More than \$2.8 million will be needed for the Co-Sponsored Seminarian Program over the next five years alone. This is in addition to the AMS annual budget of more than \$6.8 million.

Evangelization and Catechetical Leadership

The Office of Evangelization supports priests, ministry coordinators, and lay leaders to assist those serving our country and their families to proclaim the Gospel, offering a web site, app and digital media center; youth and young adult ministry partnerships; *Forming Disciples for the New Evangelization: AMS Religion Curriculum Guide* training; catechist certification and leadership training; and lay leader resources.

Sacramental Records

The Office of Sacramental Records currently maintains nearly 3 million records of sacraments administered on military installations. Unlike a conventional diocese, the AMS has no parishes or parish registries, which starkly contrasts with the model of traditional diocesan parishes. The AMS maintains all records of sacraments celebrated on U.S. Military installations and VA Medical Centers since 1920 at the Edwin Cardinal O’Brien Pastoral Center in Washington, D.C.

Veterans Affairs

The AMS is the sole provider of Catholic chaplains for the Department of Veteran Affairs Medical Centers. AMS priests provide daily availability of the Mass and the sacraments of penance and anointing of the sick. The chaplains provide pastoral support and pastoral counseling of veteran patients, their families, and the staff who care for them.

Tribunal

The Tribunal functions as a court for the Archdiocese and generally hears marriage cases. Although it mainly works with cases for possible nullity of marriage, the Tribunal handles canonical questions for the priests, deacons, and the faithful of the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA. It offers its services at no cost to the same faithful.

**Go to www.milarch.org to learn more about the AMS or to
Make a Gift in support of the 2016 Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA Appeal**

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