

**Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio, J.C.D.**  
Chrism Mass  
April 9, 2019



With the Psalmist, “forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.”

Just two weeks ago Bishops Muhm and Coffey were ordained upstairs. As a part of that rite I anointed their heads with Sacred Chrism. It is a sign of their new dignity and the abundance of divine grace that was poured out upon them. This evening we gather anew to waken ourselves to the presence of the Spirit of the Lord, to celebrate the priesthood and the ministry that is realized day in and day out across the globe, and to pray for all of those who will be enriched by the oils blessed this evening.

Both the first reading and the Gospel insist on the presence of the Spirit of the Lord. Is that not what we try to do throughout this annual Lenten retreat? We live a bit more austere, dedicate more time to prayer, and try to be more generous with the poor. All is an attempt to reawaken in us the grace of our baptism and to recognize how we have been called by the Lord who loves us.

Recognizing the presence of the Spirit within us means celebrating our dignity and that of our sisters and brothers. We have been elevated as daughters and sons of a loving Father and He calls us to the fullness of our potential. That alone is a cause for rejoicing and a motive of our self-appreciation. The reflection also draws us more deeply into the mystery of divine love.

God so loved the world that He sent His only Son into the world so that we might have life, life in abundance. That experience of self-dignity also changes our view of every other person. We lament the incivility of public discourse in the world today. Have we all forgotten that the one with an opposing view is also created in the image and likeness of God? Can

we not disagree and still recognize that dignity? There is really no place for comments *ad hominem*.

You and I are charged to elevate the world around us. We are charged to permeate the world with the fragrance of the Gospel. Our rejoicing in the call to follow Christ and to have become His brothers and sisters translates into a new way to live. We do not fear to set a new standard or to follow the example of past witnesses to the truth of the good news, the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The liturgy this evening calls us to reflect on that presence of the Spirit and to manifest what it is that we will pass on to the catechumens who will be reborn in the waters of holy baptism during the Easter Vigil.

“Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord”.

Secondly, the sacrament of Holy Orders gathers us this evening. We want to celebrate the call and response to the priesthood of Jesus Christ. Last week I spent a few days with some Army chaplains in Europe. Like priests everywhere they are spread thin, asked to do more than is possible, and pinched by incredible financial constraints despite the ever-increasing military budget.

Still they rejoice in their ministry and are excited about serving those who serve all of us. Last Saturday a co-sponsored seminarian was ordained a deacon and next month there will be several more and five new priests, as well. The Lord still calls and young men still respond eagerly to the invitation to go out into the vineyard.

That ministry was well-described by Msgr. Arnold, the Army Chief of Chaplains at one point during World War II: your sacrifice is real “leaving organized, well-equipped parishes and comfortable homes to preach the knowledge and love of God and to bring the safeguards and consolation of religion to the officers and soldiers of our defensive forces.” “Your responsibility is tremendous...inconveniences, difficulties, and hardships will be your portion. Your only sure reward will be God’s blessing and the fruits of your ministrations in the lives of your men...”<sup>1</sup>

This evening every priest and bishop here recalls the commitment of his ordination and renews the promises made at that time. We recommit ourselves to service, which is what ministry is--however much it differs from our original notion. The tone is thanksgiving manifested by the willingness to continue our ministry.

The last years have not been easy for us. Our mistakes, indifference, and lack of transparency have been continually thrust into the spotlight. Recommitment to our priestly promises in this context is also a recommitment to protect the innocent, be they children, minors, or vulnerable adults. It is a recommitment to live the promise of celibacy in a transparent way and to denounce evil when it occurs.

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from William R. Arnold to Rev. Maurice E. Powers, C.S.C. as quoted by John F. Wukovits in *Soldiers of a Different Cloth*, p. 61.

However to reduce this celebration to a simple welling in those questions would be to ignore the amazing ministry accomplished by the priests who serve the archdiocese. Their willingness to be where soldiers, sailors, marines, coast guardsmen, and airmen are, to counsel them, to bring them the sacraments, and to teach them the ways of faith must also be celebrated. Tonight we give thanks for what they have done and for what they will do.

We celebrate what Almighty God accomplishes through the instruments that He has chosen. As a successor of the Apostles, I am proud of those who serve the faithful entrusted to my pastoral care and I pray every day for more workers in the vineyard.

“Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.”

A third element is our prayer for those who will receive the sacraments of baptism and confirmation from this day forward. Their lives will be changed by the sacraments they receive. They will be strengthened by the fruit of the olive and charged by the fragrance of the Chrism to go forth as missionary disciples.

They are also present in our prayers and some of them might also be here physically. Fundamentally, the oils are blessed for them. We also see in them all of those who throughout the world will be renewed in the sacraments. It is significant to have Bishops and priests from Latin America with us to emphasize the universality of this ministry. For them also we pray.

Pope Benedict XVI in a Chrism Mass homily evoked the notion of zeal for souls and reminded us that “as priests of Jesus Christ we carry out our task with enthusiasm. No one should ever have the impression that we work conscientiously when on duty, but before and after hours we belong only to ourselves. A priest never belongs to himself. People must sense our zeal, through which we bear credible witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Let us ask the Lord to fill us with joy in his message, so that we may serve his truth and his love with joyful zeal.”<sup>2</sup>

Cierto, la Iglesia nunca celebra in realidades cerradas. Estamos siempre miembros de una Iglesia universal. Por eso estamos alegres por la presencia de nuestros hermanos de Venezuela y Colombia. Los Señores Obispos y sacerdotes han venido para significar algo sobre la realidad de su País en un momento difícil.

Personalmente, siendo encargado con una arquidiócesis presente en el mundo entero, estoy verdaderamente feliz de poder acoger representantes de una hermana Iglesia para recordar la dimensión universal de nuestra celebración y de nuestra tarea. De hecho con su oración y bendición, el aceite bendecido y consagrado esta tarde habrá un sentido muy universal.

Si la historia de los Estados Unidos de América y nuestros hermanos del sur no ha sido siempre ejemplar, sepan que aquí están bienvenidos, acompañados por nuestra oración, y unidos en una misma fe y sacerdocio. Tengan la bondad de expresar a su gente y a sus hermanos en el episcopado venezolano y colombiano nuestra solidaridad y apoyo.

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<sup>2</sup> Benedict XVI, Homily at the Chrism Mass, 5.IV.12

My words to our brothers and sisters from Venezuela are simple to express our unity with them and our desire to accompany them on the way to a more serene and fruitful experience. I assured them of our prayers and our awareness of their particular situation.

“Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.”

Yes, I hope that the chasubles inundated with Sacred Chrism at the ordination are now cleaned, but I live in the certain hope that the oil poured out on the new bishops' heads, on the heads of all the bishops here, on the hands of the priests, and on the foreheads of the confirmed and the crowns of the baptized has made a difference. We are ready to continue the sacred task of permeating our world with the newness of the Gospel.