



ARCHDIOCESE FOR THE MILITARY SERVICES, USA
Office of the Archbishop

15 October 2020
St. Teresa of Avila

Dear Brothers,

Several times of late the question of responsibility for the Catholic community has been brought to my attention. It is understandable, because in addition to being members of a hierarchical Church, we work within a system that has very clear ideas about rank and responsibility.

Added to the confusion is the fact that, as Archbishop, I do not assign priests and, other than Most Holy Trinity at West Point, there are no parishes in the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA. Consequently, with that one exception, there are no canonical pastors.

Attached, you will please find a document that I have prepared to delineate who, in the eyes of the AMS, is responsible for the Catholic community. While I have tried to consider all of the possibilities, perhaps one or two have escaped me.

However, there is no question that the first principle on the list is the most important and the one that should guide the collaboration among brothers by ordination and by commitment to the Catholic community. We are all individuals, and most of us have clear and distinct ideas, but we should witness to charity in all things.

The document, "Responsibility for the Catholic Community" is effective today and becomes part of the Priests' Manual.

Renewing my gratitude for all that you do to care for the men, women, and families entrusted to our pastoral care and with every good wish, I remain

Fraternally in Christ,

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

Responsibility for the Catholic Community

At times the presence on the same installation of an active-duty Catholic priest and a civilian contractor has brought to the fore the question of roles, responsibility, and accountability for the Catholic community.

It seems wise to clarify certain principles.

1. In all situations, Christian charity, priestly fraternity, and common sense are the first rules of engagement.
2. With the exception of Command Chaplains whose offices may be at a given installation, the AMS presumes that the ranking active-duty Catholic priest is in charge of the Catholic community, whether he is assigned to the installation chapel or a specific unit at the installation. So also should there be no uniformed priest, but a GS priest and a full-time contract priest, it is presumed that the GS priest is in charge of the Catholic community. The same would be true if there is a full-time and a part-time contractor.
3. That same priest will be the point of reference for communications from the AMS, acknowledgements for designated offerings, and the point of contact for pastoral visitation. He is designated as the Primary Contact on the CRM.
4. Unless other determinations are communicated to the AMS, that priest is the Catholic DRE for his installation (see Priests' Manual, 3.1)
5. The priests at an installation will determine how duties are shared, but that does not mean that a priest isolates himself from the Catholic community.
6. Priests may determine that, given deployments and the stability of the civilian priest, it would be better that the civilian priest direct the day-to-day ministry to the community. That determination should be the result of a prayerful dialogue between or among the priests. Then it can be communicated to the AMS chancellor and the regional Episcopal Vicar, but still does not alter the determination given in #2 above.
7. In cases of conflict, please refer to the first principle (1.) above.