

# Archbishop for U.S. military asks prayers for men, women in uniform

WASHINGTON - Leading prayers for a "lasting and just peace," Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services urged the faithful to remember all service men and women deceased, wounded in action and deployed.

"This afternoon we beg our eucharistic Lord to make us instruments of peace," Archbishop Broglio said at a Holy Hour for armed forces personnel Aug. 3 at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington.

"We cannot fail to experience the power of Jesus Christ in the exposed sacrament," he said.

Reminding the faithful that Pope Benedict XVI declared June 2008 to June 2009 as the year of St. Paul, the archbishop turned to Paul's writings of peace. "Is this a strange message in a time of war? I think not," the prelate added.

He remembered all those touched by war, especially those families affected by the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The archbishop prayed at length for all victims of war, those who have died and those who have been wounded on "all sides of the conflict."

"We cannot undo their physical and mental anguish but we can ask God to alleviate their struggles and strengthen them for their trials," Archbishop Broglio said.

In his reflection, the archbishop also remembered the chaplains of the armed forces, as well as the families of victims who mourn a loss or continue to care for the wounded.

Installed last January to head the military archdiocese, Archbishop Broglio led more than 250 people gathered for the late afternoon liturgy; they included veterans, widows, parents of soldiers, women religious, priests and seminarians.

He urged all to "open our hearts and minds to the riches of world cultures. We can

promote peace with our thoughts, words and deeds.”

Outside on a street near the national shrine a handful of people protested all wars with banners and a drum, but prayers for peace continued in the shrine’s crypt church.

Later Archbishop Broglio told the Catholic Standard, Washington’s archdiocesan newspaper, that it is the “desire of every human being to live in peace,” including those he has met within the armed forces. “They are obedient, and they do what they have to do,” he added.

The prelate noted that he was surprised and pleased by the turnout for the Holy Hour, which the military archdiocese organized as an official reminder of the “genuine need to pray for and with” members of the military who are currently deployed, those who are wounded and those who have died.

Dominican Father Basil Cole said he was there to support Archbishop Broglio and pray for the armed forces.

Alma Pitts drove from Baltimore with friends to attend the Holy Hour and pray for peace because she is concerned about the Iraq War.

Cecilia and Jim Hoffman of St. Aloysius Parish in Leonardtown, Md., prayed for their son, Army 1st Lt. Matthew Hoffman, a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, N.Y., who has been serving in Iraq since September 2007.

“This was absolutely beautiful,” Cecilia Hoffman said of the liturgy. “That’s what gets us through – prayer.”