

Interviewer:

Good afternoon.

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Good afternoon.

Interviewer:

Could you state your name, please?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Timothy P. Broglio.

Interviewer:

And could you spell your last name for the record?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

B-R-O-G-L-I-O.

Interviewer:

And your date of birth?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

I was born on the 22 of December, 1951.

Interviewer:

And you are the?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Iâ€™m the Archbishop for the Military Services of the United States.

Interviewer:

And todayâ€™s date is April 2, 2015. Thank you for joining us here today and spending some time with us. How did you end up joining the priesthood? When did you get the call?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Well, I came from a very actively practicing Catholic family. Lived about a block and a half from the parish church.

Interviewer:

Where was this?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

In Cleveland Heights, Ohio; and I was involved in things in the parish. I think initially I was attracted by what I saw the priest doing. Itâ€™s a large parish. Had a pastor who when he died was 89 years old, and was still a pastor of the parish, and 3 associates, weekend help. These were the good old days, the flower of days, when church was flourishing in the United States. I think I seriously started to think about priesthood when this older pastor was dying, and I sort of began to calculate about who might fill his shoes. I didnâ€™t think I was that talented to do that, but I thought maybe I could somewhere down the line substitute for someone who would substitute for him.

So thatâ€™s sort of the first inklings I had of priesthood. I went to Jesuit Catholic High School, and by the end of my years in high school, through prayer, through talking to people that I trusted, I was convinced that the Lord was calling me to be a diocesan priest. However, I was going to spend the rest of my life in parishes, so I thought I should stay with my peers as long as I could. I didnâ€™t want to lose any time, though, so I wanted to go to a Catholic university, so I went to Boston College. And after my first year at Boston College, I asked the rector of the seminary in Cleveland what I would need to do to get into the seminary; what courses I needed. Largely because my dentist had a son who was ordained for the same diocese who graduated from Notre Dame.

You know, the first leader of the Catholic universities. And he was sent back to Borromeo College to finish some courses, and I thought, â€œWell, I donâ€™t want to graduate with a college degree and then be sent back with the under grads.â€ So I determined what was necessary in order to have the philosophical courses that I needed to be accepted into the seminary, and so I did those during my last two years at Boston College.

Interviewer:

You were at Boston College in the late â€™60s, early â€™70s.

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Thatâ€™s correct.

Interviewer:

That mustâ€™ve been an interesting time to be there.

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

It was a very interesting time to be there. It was the time the university struck, because they were going to raise the tuition. And then when they resolved that strike, there was the incursion in Cambodia, and there was another strike, so it was a very challenging time to be at Boston College. Itâ€™s a time also of a lot of experimentation in the church; a lot of theological investigation even on an undergraduate level, so it was challenging to be there at that time.

Interviewer:

Did any of your friends or fellow students try to dissuade you from entering the church, or was there surprise or anything, any reaction?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

No. I think people had pretty much determined thatâ€™s probably where I was headed. I would go to daily mass, and concentrated on my studies, so I didnâ€™t have people trying to talk me out of it, no. I mightâ€™ve had people who didnâ€™t understand what I was doing, but.

Interviewer:

Did your parents; did your parents support you?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

My parents were very supportive. My parents - two things. One, they made it very clear that if at some time in my process in discernment decided that priesthood was not for me, come home. There would be no shame. I would be welcome. And my father felt that since he had paid for post-graduate education for my siblings - Iâ€™m the youngest of five - that he should also pay for my post-graduate studies, even though normally, a diocese assumes those responsibilities. But he donated what theology studies wouldâ€™ve cost to the Diocese of Cleveland, because he felt, â€œIâ€™m able to do that, so I should do that.â€

Interviewer:

So where did you end up going to seminary?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Well, thatâ€™s actually an interesting story because, obviously, I was headed toward the seminary in Cleveland. I had two very good friends, one of whom was a professor at that seminary - at that point, a professor emeritus - and another friend who was pastor of one of the Italian national parishes in Cleveland. And they both felt that I would profit from going overseas to study theology, and so they interceded with the Bishop. Mind you, the Diocese of Cleveland had not sent a seminarian to the North American College in ten years. But they asked the Bishop of Cleveland, Clarence Isenmann, to consider sending me to Rome. And I can say as a bishop today, I would not do what Bishop Isenmann did, because I was not in the seminary system. I hadnâ€™t gone to the high school, and I hadnâ€™t gone to the college, and here I was going to apply to Saint Maryâ€™s Seminary in Cleveland. And he appointed me to the North American College in Rome, based on the testimony of these two priests.

Interviewer:

That mustâ€™ve been quite a transition.

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

It was quite a transition. I was excited about going, and it was - for me, it was a very positive experience. It was a very talented house.

Interviewer:

How large was the class?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

The class - well, the class was 51 when I started, and there were 180 students in the

seminary, including we had four fifth-year priests in the seminary as well. So it was a large house for a seminary in the 1970s, but a very -

Interviewer:

Were classes in Italian, or?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

I went to the Gregorian University, so I have 15 years of Jesuit education, and they were taught in Italian, yes.

Interviewer:

How was your Italian starting out?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Well, I had a little advantage over my classmates, because when I knew I was going to the seminary in Rome, I got an Italian grammar from an Italian professor at John Carroll who was a friend of the family's, and I went through that grammar. And my father, who started school in Cleveland, Ohio, unable to say a word in English, even though he was born in a tenement in New York City, but started school with his two languages being Italian and Piedmontese, he helped me with the pronunciation because, of course, his pronunciation was still very good. Even though he was a physician, so he's obviously learned English very well, but. So I had a little advantage, but I learned quite a bit of Italian, and when I came back for post-graduate studies after ordination, I discovered how little Italian I knew, even though I would've been one of the more fluent members of the seminary community when I was ordained.

Interviewer:

When did you graduate from seminary?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Okay. I was ordained in 1977.

Interviewer:

So you were in Rome in a very interesting period, too.

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Yes, I was.

Interviewer:

That was during the period I think of the kidnap -

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

It was Paul VI.

Interviewer:

Hmm?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

It was Paul VI, and I would've - I actually left Rome just before Aldo Moro was kidnapped.

Interviewer:

Right; I was about to get to that.

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Do you remember that - so you were not in Rome for the kidnapping.

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

I was not in Rome when it happened, but obviously I followed it rather closely, because I had just left Rome, and I knew that he was a very, very important figure also as a - he was very big in Catholic action. So he was a well-known figure in Catholic circles as well.

Interviewer:

Where did you go after seminary?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

I was assigned to a parish in South Euclid, Ohio. It's about 20 minutes from home, which was a wonderful, wonderful assignment. There was another associate who was just a year older than I was, and then the pastor. It was a thriving parish, and I had a number of

responsibilities there. We taught in the school.

Interviewer:

Was that a difficult - it seems to me that one of the things we come up with in doing all these interviews around West Point is you spent four years basically of theory, right?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Yes.

Interviewer:

And then you come out of your college education, your post-graduate education. All of a sudden, you're confronted with putting theory into practice, and this is often very difficult and challenging. And I'm wondering what the challenges in your case were for putting - all of a sudden being faced with the day to day reality of carrying out your pastoral duties.

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Yes. And for me, it was particularly challenging because I had gone to a highly high-powered academic setting, where most of my professors would've been men who contributed to the council documents. They would've been the real experts at the council. So it was very theoretical. And to try and bring that to a pastoral setting, not even having been formed in a more pastoral seminary environment, which would've been the case in the diocesan seminary, for me it was a bit of a challenge. To learn how to even to preach in a way that would reach people, rather than being too theoretical, or too if the people are here and you're talking up there, then that's not very helpful for them. So those were things I had to learn. I also had to learn how to talk to the kids.

Because I didn't think I was very good at that, and one of the things I learned very quickly was just be yourself, and they'll take you for who you are. They won't accept it if you're trying to be someone you're not. So those were good lessons to learn. I also learned how to direct things a little bit, because I was put in charge of various programs.

Interviewer:

Was the transition from theory to practice more difficult than you anticipated?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Actually, I think it was, in one sense it was easier, because the people were so accepting, and so welcoming. And I think that was something that perhaps I should've been prepared for, but I really wasn't. I mean you were there as the priest, so they did listen to you, and they did open themselves up to you.

Interviewer:

What sort of congregation was it?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

I would say middle class congregation.

Interviewer:

What were the concerns; what were the problems that people brought to you?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Well, it was a changing neighborhood, so of course that was something. And it was curious, because it straddled two cities. Part of the parish came from South Euclid, which was basically populated by people who had fled from the inner city, and were now looking for their next flight further east.

Interviewer:

Old Clevelanders, for lack of a better word.

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Yes. And then Cleveland Heights, which is a very successfully integrated community, and also the part of Cleveland Heights I came from would've been populated by a lot of the university professors from Case Western Reserve. So there were two very different views on this whole experience of integration, and social justice, and so forth. So it was interesting to be there and to try and bring people along to a certain understanding the

church had of social justice. And there, you know, when you're dealing with somebody who's worried about his or her kids, you can't really talk theory to them. You have to try and meet them where they are, and if you can, help them to perhaps understand and move along.

But that wasn't always easy, and it probably ultimately wasn't successful, because that parish is closed now - or it's been merged with the parish next door.

Interviewer:

It's also a question of leadership.

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Yes.

Interviewer:

So obviously another topic that we're very concerned with at West Point, training future leaders of the military. And how do you develop leadership skills in yourself to bring people along who maybe are resistant to change, or maybe don't want to be led?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

I think one thing is that you learn quite a bit by your mistakes in terms of how you approach an issue. I think as a young priest, I probably would've been more in favor of, or I would've tended more to direct confrontation. It's only later that I learned that the best way is to get the people on board with you, and to decide that perhaps it's their idea. My favorite example of that is Nathan and David, when the prophet Nathan is sent to read David the riot act because he's committed adultery, and killed Uriah the Hittite. And how does Nathan do that? He does it by telling a story, and David reacts very violently to the story.

And then Nathan goes in for the kill, and says [Hebrew phrase] "You are that man." And I think that's, you know - but I had to learn that. I had to learn that it wasn't just enough to tell somebody something; you had to convince him. And I probably should've learned that, because that's a very Italian way to deal with things, but I hadn't spent enough time in Italy then. I'd only spent four years. That's the graduate level of Italian learning.

Interviewer:

How long were you in that parish for?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Parish? Only two years. And I used to say - until I was ordained a Bishop, I used to say those were the best two years of my life. 'Cause I knew it was going to be a short stint, 'cause I had to go back to finish a degree. I didn't realize it was going to be the only stint in the Diocese of Cleveland, but. So I basically said "yes" to everything people asked me to do, because I was 25 years old, bundles of energy.

Interviewer:

Right.

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

And I knew it wasn't going to last forever, so - and I'm very grateful that I approached it that way.

Interviewer:

Where did you go after Cleveland?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

I went back to Rome to finish a degree, which I thought was a year. I went back to Rome with what TWA would let me take as luggage, so my carry-on was my typewriter. And shortly after I got to Rome, I was called over to the Secretariat of State, and I was met by then-Monsignor Justin Regali, and all the way over I was wondering what I had done, because why would I be called to the Secretariat of State? And I remember I was seated in one of these ornate receiving rooms on basically the fifth floor of the Apostolic Palace; it's the same floor the Pope lives on - or lived on. And he came into this room, sat in one of these gilded chairs, and said, "I don't believe in wasting time. Would you accept an appointment to the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy?" And I didn't say

anything. And he said, "Well, you know what the Academy is, don't you?" I said, "Well, yes, Monsignor, I do; I'm well aware of what it is." So then he starts talking, and I realize that he wants me to say "yes" or "no" right then and there.

Interviewer:

And you're how old at this point?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

I would've been 27, almost 28. And so I was thinking to myself, "How do I buy time?" So finally I asked him, when he came up for a breath of air, I asked him, "When do you need to know?" I think he was taken aback, because he did want me to say "yes" or "no." He was leaving with the Holy Father for Ireland and the United States; this is 1979, Pope John Paul II's first visit to the United States. And he said, "Well - basically, he gave me 24 hours, and so I made my decision to accept the invitation in those 24 hours."

Interviewer:

And that set your career trajectory off in a whole new direction, I would imagine.

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Exactly. Exactly. Now, I did know that I could opt out of the academia, and so on.

Interviewer:

For those of us who aren't Catholic, explain what the Academy is, precisely.

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

The Academy is a school in Rome where the students live - it's a house of studies - but the last two years that you are there, depending on what academic credentials you come in with - you have to have a license, which is a little better than a master's degree, in canon law, and then you have to have a doctorate in something. So if you need to finish those degrees, you can do that while you're living there. But the last two years are dedicated to preparing for direct service to the Holy See as a Vatican diplomat. So it's study the history of Vatican diplomacy; you study how to write reports. You study the preparation for the nomination of bishops. You study a little bit of economy; and those are basically the subject matters.

And if you successfully complete this course, you're admitted to the exam, so if you're invited to take the exam, you know you've passed the exam. And then you're assigned as a diplomat, a representative of the Holy See, to some country, with someone else. Someone else is head of the mission, and you are the, as we jokingly used to say, the first councilor, but there's no second councilor, so you're usually the only councilor.

Interviewer:

Basically, the Pope's Foreign Service.

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Exactly. Exactly. About 250 to 300 priests, priests and archbishops, who represent the Holy See in 180 countries. Some of those are obviously you have one representative who may have more than one country.

Interviewer:

Where were you posted to; you were posted to a number of countries in South America, weren't you?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Well, I was posted first to the Ivory Coast in West Africa. I was there for four years. And then from there, I was transferred to Paraguay, in South America. I was there for three years. And then I was posted to the Secretariat of State, and I was there for 11 years.

Interviewer:

What are the sort of issues that you're dealing with when you're in Ivory Coast or Paraguay?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Ivory Coast, we covered three countries. We covered Ivory Coast, which was a very

progressive, very prosperous nation at the time I was there; country which put a great deal of importance on education. We also covered Burkina Faso, which is one of the seven poorest nations of the world, and we also covered Niger - Niger, which is basically desert. The population was slightly under 100,000 when I was there, mostly Muslim. So three very different realities. The issues that we dealt with considerably in the Ivory Coast were, of course first, evangelization; it was a country where evangelization was only a hundred years old, so that was supporting the mission and the missionary bishops. Helping them progress in evangelizing.

Also concerns about migration, because there was a tremendous migration to the Ivory Coast, so you wanted those people to be cared for, and to be treated well. Tribalism was and is still a major factor in Africa, so you have an amazing solidarity for your ethnic group. I mean if you're doing well, you have a responsibility to help someone from your village who's in need, whatever he or she needs. A person that's not from your ethnic group, he can die on your doorstep, and it doesn't matter. So obviously, the gospel would have a great deal to say about that, and you'd try to integrate the gospel message into the understanding of solidarity, and that human concerns extend beyond ethnic ties.

So that was a very challenging issue.

Interviewer:

And what were you doing in Paraguay?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Paraguay, I was again Secretary of the Apostolic Nunciature. It was a very quiet Apostolic nunciature, so after the Papal visit, I was basically pastor over a mission community. But we did have the Papal visit to prepare for. John Paul II came for the first time to Paraguay in 1988, stayed with us for two and a half days, so I had first-hand experience of regular interchange with the Holy Father, which is obviously a very unique experience to have.

Interviewer:

Was that your first meeting with him?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Well, I had met him in audiences, but -

Interviewer:

Your first -

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

It was my first, you know, having lunch with him, that kind of thing, meeting. And really appreciated both his great sense of humor, and also his attentiveness to the mission. I mean the one day we had lunch with him, which was his birthday, he was going to meet with the young people, and that was, although it was not announced as such, it was a working lunch. He really asked us about the Catholic University, and actually had his talk changed to add a whole message about the Catholic University of Paraguay, which was very much appreciated by the Catholic community and by the bishops, and obviously by the Catholic University. But I wish that I had known that it was going to be a working lunch; I would've boned up before sitting down.

Interviewer:

There's been so much written about John Paul II, and he's really taken - even before his death, he's taken on a larger than life sort of aura about him; both his energy and his - I think energy is probably the most salient fact.

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

It is. And I think during that experience, I learned how energetic he was. He was writing the - you know, at the Wednesday audience after a trip outside of Italy, he would always give a little summary of that trip. And he wrote that - I saw him writing it with his own hand, in Polish, and it would be translated into Italian, and -

Interviewer:

He was writing in Polish first, though.

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

He was - written in Polish first, yes; â€˜cause obviously he was very familiar.

Interviewer:

Sure.

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

And also, you got a tremendous impression of his prayer life. He spent a great deal of time in the chapel, despite the fact that the schedule was grueling.

Interviewer:

Did you ever have any experiences with liberation theology in South America?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

A little bit. Actually, we had a very interesting experience on that Papal visit. The Holy Father always met in Latin America with - there was always a meeting which was called with the constructores de la sociedad. And basically what that was was a meeting with people who didnâ€™t fit into any other category - political opposition, even that was never said directly. University, the world of culture, theater and the arts. When the Holy Father came to Paraguay, Alfredo Stroessner was still the president, who was a dictator. At a certain point before the visit, he decided, or the government decided, they were going to cancel the meeting with the constructores de la sociedad, because they felt it was getting too boisterous.

Well, you cannot cancel an event on a mutually scheduled trip or a visit, state visit by a head of state. I mean Holy Father, although he came primarily as the Pastor of the Universal Church, also came as a head of state, which involves certain protocol. So when the government communicated to the Nunciature that the meeting with the constructores de la sociedad was being canceled, the Nuncio received instructions from the Secretariat of State that he was to go to the Foreign Ministry and inform them that either the program as had been mutually agreed would be respected, or the Holy Father would cancel the visit to Paraguay. I personally thought that this was a bluff.

I later learned, because I was in good contact with the Alitalia representative who always went on the trip, and we talked afterwards. And he said, â€œOh no.â€ He said, â€œI was given instructions to get a flight plan from Lima, which was the last stop before going to Paraguay, directly to Rome.â€ They were very serious. The government, when they heard this message, realized, â€œWell, weâ€™re not just dealing with a group of priests,â€ and if the visit were canceled, it probably wouldâ€™ve brought down the government, because before the visit, as in all cases, there was a tremendous catechesis. The whole - Paraguay had four million people at this time - the whole country was expecting this visit. It wouldâ€™ve been unthinkable that it be - and of course, even as insular as Paraguay was, the people wouldâ€™ve been told why it was canceled.

Or they wouldâ€™ve found out one way or another, even - of course, this was before internet, this was before lots of things, but. So the government backed down, and the meeting was held, and you know, there were certainly the discourses that were made to welcome the Holy Father were perhaps not exactly the right tone. But they were - he responded in a way that I think was very helpful, and it was a very interesting experience. It also helped me appreciate why the Holy See uses that card as being a nation and a state visit when itâ€™s useful.

And of course, as you probably know, the Holy Fatherâ€™s visit was in May of â€™88. In February of â€™89, there was a coup dâ€™tat, and Alfred Stroessner was thrown out as president, and another General came in.

Interviewer:

Were you there?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

I was there. In fact, it was a very interesting experience, because I was very active in this community. And when I came back from the community that night, because the community was dedicated to Saint Blaise - Saint Blaiseâ€™s feast is on the third, this was the second of February. And as I was closing the gate to the Nunciature driveway, I heard fireworks.

Now, mind you, I knew less about the military than I know now, but I thought they were fireworks. â€œI donâ€™t remember them having fireworks for Saint Blaise Day last year,â€ but I didnâ€™t think too much more of it. Closed the gate, went upstairs. And my custom was to improve my Spanish was I would usually turn on the television. There were two Paraguayan stations and an Argentinian station, so we had three possibilities. So I turned on the television, then went back to sit down in the easy chair, and the station went off the air.

Now, it was a fairly primitive country, so I didnâ€™t think too much of it. I went back to the television - there was no remote - and put on the other station. Before I could get back to the chair, that station went off. So I put on the Argentinian station, which was still playing. In the meantime, the fireworks are getting louder, and Iâ€™m thinking, â€œHmmâ€ there must be something going on here.â€ At that point, the lights went out. And the Nuncio called me on the intercom and said, â€œDo you know whatâ€™s going on?â€ I said, â€œWell, I have no idea.â€ He said, â€œWell, come here.â€ And we sat on the floor in the hallway, where there were no windows, just in case. Now, mind you, my Nuncio was a little boy during the Second World War, so of course he knew what dangers there could be, and he was very concerned about nothing happening.

And we listened to the reports of the coup on the radio, which did function. And we had a blow by blow description.

Interviewer:

Was it a very violent affair?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

It was. It was five hours, and we could hear the shooting because we were close enough to the presidential palace. It has never been revealed the number of casualties there were. The official number is 38, which means that either someoneâ€™s lying, or the Paraguayanâ€™s were very bad shots. But eventually, the President Stroessner agreed to surrender power, and arrangements were made to have him go to Brazil, where he lived until his death.

Interviewer:

And when did you meet the new boss?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Curiously enough, I met him exactly a year to the day that I had met his predecessor, because to celebrate the Papal visit they had a year-later celebration. And after the mass, I met General Rodriguez, and I thought, â€œHmm, this is interesting. Itâ€™s exactly a year after I met his predecessor for the first time.â€ Also in the context of the Papal visit.

Interviewer:

Was that an awkward encounter, or is your diplomatic skills -

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Well, at my level, I was the Secretary of the Nunciature, so I just shook his hand and told him who I was; it was nothing more than that.

Interviewer:

And when did you leave Paraguay?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

I left Paraguay in May of 1990.

Interviewer:

And then spent 11 years as the -

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Well, initially I went as a desk officer for six Latin American countries. I had Cuba, Columbia, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala.

Interviewer:

You say â€œdesk officerâ€ you make it sound like itâ€™s just the equivalent of the U.S. State Department.

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Exactly; same thing. I was in the section of the Secretariat of State that functions as a

Foreign Ministry, so weâ€™re divided by countries. And so curiously enough, I had the six countries that the fellow who was made nuncio and who had just left the office, the same six that he had, because thatâ€™s the way it was done. Thatâ€™s created a little consternation in Cuba because here was this North American who was suddenly the desk officer for Cuba. Was this part of some arcane plot by the C.I.A. or something? And of course it wasnâ€™t. Itâ€™s just those were the countries that Monsignor Berloco had, so those were the countries that I received. When I was asked to be at the direct service of the Cardinal Secretary of State, I lost the two bigger countries. So I lost Cuba and Columbia, as I would not have been able to do both jobs.

Interviewer:

And when did you become Archbishop of the U.S. - was there a step in between there and - Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Yes. I became the Apostolic - I was ordained by John Paul II on the 19 of March, 2001, and sent as the Apostolic nuncio to Dominican Republic, and the Apostolic delegate to Puerto Rico. And I was in that role for seven years.

Interviewer:

How does that role differ from your previous role in Paraguay?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

I was in charge of the mission. I was the Ambassador.

Interviewer:

Gotcha.

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

And I was also the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, because in most Catholic countries, the representative of the Holy Father is the Dean. You can use the two systems, the one we use in the United States, which is the Ambassador whoâ€™s been there the longest, or you can have the representative of the Holy See. But in Catholic countries, itâ€™s usually the representative of the Holy See, which was basically a pain in the neck, but.

Interviewer:

Why was that?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Well, â€˜cause you had to go to everything, you know. They would expect the Dean to be there. Generally, you had to go to the other countries for their national days, for their reception, because you were the Dean; you represented the Corps.

Interviewer:

Gotcha. How were you chosen to become Archbishop of the Military?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Thatâ€™s a good question. [Laughs]

Interviewer:

Did you see that coming?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

No, I did not. I was making my annual visit to Rome in September-October of 2007. I went to see the substitute of the Secretary of State, who basically is in charge of the section for General Affairs, so the language sections, protocol, administration, and also the movement of nuncios. And I knew that they werenâ€™t going to leave me in the Dominican Republic for the rest of my life. I had been there seven years, and I figured itâ€™s probably too good to last too much longer, so I was expecting a change. And the - now, mind you, I was talking to someone that I was in school with, so itâ€™s a very friendly conversation, and he said to me, â€œWell, now letâ€™s talk about you.â€

And as I said, I wasnâ€™t surprised. I had my eye on a country where I thought I might go. And he comes out with, â€œWeâ€™re thinking of naming you Military Ordinary of the United States.â€ And I thought, â€œWhy? What?â€ And he proceeded to give some reasons, and of course one of the big things for them was they donâ€™t have to ask for a PLOTCHIT from the U.S. government, because separation of church and state, itâ€™s

simply an appointment. In my case, an appointment by Pope Benedict that's just like he names any other bishop in the United States. So - and he started to give me some reasons, and one of the reasons he thought was most important was that 1/3 of the military in the United States has Spanish as its first language. Wouldn't it be good if their shepherd, if their pastor also spoke Spanish?

I'm sure - I've worked on the other side of that desk long enough to know that if they want you to do something, they'll think of reasons that might justify their choice. And so I really had no reason to say "no," and at least in my training, especially my Jesuit training, you don't have a good reason to say "no," and it would've been possible to say "no" because they had not yet gone to the Holy Father, so at that point it would've just died. But I accepted. I often tell people that I would not have accepted had I realized that the archdiocese was bankrupt, because I would have said, "Well, I have no experience raising money; I've never had to do that." But I've discovered it's an acquired skill.

Interviewer:

So how many Catholics are in your archdiocese?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

We calculate about 1.8 million, because the archdiocese covers Catholics who are Active Duty in the military and their immediate families; all Catholics in hospitals of the Department of Veterans Affairs; and then any Catholic who works for the Federal Government - that would include contractors - outside of the boundaries of the United States. So that would include the Diplomatic Corps, it would include DoD teachers. There's not much that we do for that third category, but they do fall under my jurisdiction.

Interviewer:

What are the special challenges? It seems to me that that would bring with it special challenges, because it's such a dispersed congregation.

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

The challenges, many, many challenges; one, of course, is the extension. The diocese is almost worldwide, so poetically I like to say the sun never sets on my archdiocese. Or as someone said, "We'll make it more positive. The sun's always rising on our archdiocese." [Laughs] So that's one problem. Second problem is we don't have enough priests to minister to all of these communities. A third challenge is I don't assign my priests, okay? They're assigned by the Chiefs of Chaplains, or by the Department of Veterans Affairs, so that's a problem. Finances are a problem. A normal territorial bishop would normally take a percentage of every Sunday collection; I can't do that. Federal Government won't allow me to do that. So I have to raise the \$5.5 million that it takes to run the archdiocese every year. So those are some of the challenges. Even trying to reach people when the platform is worldwide is a challenge. You do it through the communities that you know about. You do it through the priests, but it's - now, to help me in my ministry, I have four auxiliary bishops, and I spend roughly 200 days a year on the road, visiting the communities, trying to see how they're doing. Try to spread the good news of the gospel to them.

Interviewer:

But you also have a very diverse congregation; the congregation is incredibly diverse. It's as diverse as the military, which is becoming, as we discussed earlier before we got on camera, ever more diverse.

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Exactly. So that's a challenge, too. And also we're living in an age which is much more secular than that which my predecessors operated in, and so that also presents a series of challenges to making the message available and credible, and still respect everyone's rights.

Interviewer:

Did you go to - you were in your position, obviously, during Iraq, during, while there were

troops in Iraq. Did you make any visits to Iraq or Afghanistan?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

I was able to go to Iraq once, in 2009, and then last year, in 2014, I visited Afghanistan. Both times during Holy Week.

Interviewer:

How long were you there for?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Basically a week, a long week. And in both instances, it was also in response - to go to Iraq, I actually asked General Odierno, whom I had known, and he was at that time the Commander of all the forces in Iraq. This was after I had been told - because that's a frequent question - I had been told that that wouldn't be possible. And I wanted to be able to say the next time I was asked, "Well, I've done everything I possibly could." When I wrote to General Odierno, the response was by return mail. It was, "Yes. Contact Lieutenant Commander So-and-so, who's in charge of visits." In Afghanistan, the invitation actually came from General Dunford. It was his initiative. He wanted me to come for Holy Week, so I had to cancel a number of commitments that I had for Holy Week so that I could be there.

But of course, everyone understands if you're going to the A.O.R. that that takes precedence over anything else. For me, both of those visits were extremely moving.

Interviewer:

How so?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Well, being with my flock at their - you know, at one of the crucial junctures of their service. They're in harm's way. To be there, to hear them tell me how important it was that I came, that I cared enough to make the trip. I think, you know, washing the feet of people in the military on Holy Thursday, and knowing that they could be killed - that for me was very, very moving. And it's filling a pastoral need in very concrete situations.

Interviewer:

There's also a certain irony, isn't there, of celebrating Holy Week in the middle of a war zone? I mean -

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Isn't there also a certain tension there?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

There is, and I think that makes prayer for peace all the more intense, because one of the things that I've discovered in the seven years that I've been the Archbishop of the Military Services is that none of my people particularly want war. And I think particularly at this junction, most of them are sick of it. And so that's something that perhaps the general public would not necessarily appreciate or be aware of.

Interviewer:

I was going to ask you about how you reconcile being a man of peace with sort of catering or administering to a military organization, which does have as its ultimate goal violence.

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Yes, well.

Interviewer:

I mean I don't know what else to call it.

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

I don't know that the military would recognize its ultimate goal as violence.

Interviewer:

I phrased that very poorly - excuse me. But you know what I'm saying.

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Yes, I do know what you're saying. And I think I would respond to that question two

ways. One, I'm basically taking care of the pastoral needs of people in a given situation, so I'm not ministering to the machine. I'm ministering to men and women who don't choose where they are. They've chosen, yes, to be part of the military, basically out of love for their country, but I'm ministering to them in that concrete situation. And also I'm trying to minister to people who can be an instrument of peace and dissuasion. We just recently heard Pope Francis respond to the situation about ISIS in Iraq, saying that yes, something has to be done to save those lives, to preserve Christianity in that part of the world.

And so I think in that sense, if something has to be done, well then, someone has to minister to the people who have to do it. Ironical also, of course, is to celebrate the most important days in the Catholic tradition of Holy Week - to celebrate them in countries that are predominately Muslim. Very unusual, and in Afghanistan, I celebrated a second Easter Sunday mass in the Italian chapel, which is the only permanently established Catholic church in Afghanistan.

Interviewer:

How long has it been there for?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

It's been there since the 1930s. It was established to minister to the Italians in the embassy, but then also to the diplomatic community.

Interviewer:

Obviously, we're talking about how the military's in transition, but also the church is in transition. Especially now, I think, with Pope Francis recently coming on the scene.

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Is that fair to say?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Oh, very definitely, very definitely. It's certainly a different approach; certainly a great desire to, you know, for direct contact. Pope Francis is extremely, extremely spontaneous in his gestures, in his reaching out to people, so that's definitely a change from the way the Papacy has traditionally been orchestrated. So that represents a change. And also some of the questions that he's asking. His concept, which comes very much from Latin America, that the church is permanently in mission, and that men and women have to be accompanied on their journey to Jesus Christ; those are two of the themes that he constantly hits. Mission and accompaniment, and so that's certainly - I wouldn't say that it's a complete change, but it's certainly a difference in the approach.

Interviewer:

And certainly the connection he's made with people could not be more different than his predecessor.

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Exactly. Exactly.

Interviewer:

What is next for you? You have any idea how long you'll remain in your current position for?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Well, I know it can't be any more than 12 years -

Interviewer:

Okay.

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Because in 12 years I'll have to write a letter to the Holy Father resigning, because I'll be 75. My only concern is the first two Archbishops for Military Services did serve until they were 75. My immediate predecessor served ten years. My only concern would be I would not want to be serving if I'm not able to do the travel, because that's a huge part of the ministry, and if I'm not able to maintain that travel schedule, then I would

want to be replaced by someone who's younger.

Interviewer:

You said when we began our conversation - or I think actually I asked you before the conversation started on the camera - you don't come from a military family. Have there been any surprises that you've learned over the past eight years, I think it's been, as you've learned about the military, as you've administered to a military congregation, or in this current role? What have you learned about the military culture that surprised you?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Well, certainly from my vantage point, one of the things that I learned almost immediately was the willingness of those people who are active in the Catholic life of communities, they throw themselves in immediately. You know, in a parish, a newcomer tends to kind of test the water, and stay on the periphery, at least initially. In military communities, if they're going to be involved, they're involved right from day one, because they know they're only going to be in that particular community for a short time. So that struck me as being - that was something brand new. I think also the - you know, when you talk about pastoral programming, in a normal diocese you'd think in terms of years, or a program that would last a certain amount of time. In the military, we can't do that.

In our diocese, if we're going to do a program, it has to be something that can probably be executed at the most in six months. I also learned that some of the disarray in terms of catechetical preparation, just simply because people are constantly P.C.S.ing. And so in order to meet that responsibility, it took me a while to do it, but I hired a Director of Faith Formation for the archdiocese, and had him develop an archdiocesan curriculum for religious education, which is called Forming Disciples for the New Evangelization. So that Tommy and Joan, who are at West Point right now, if they P.C.S. in the middle of the year to Stuttgart, at least as far as religious education is concerned, they may be using different books.

But the material, what they're expected to learn, will be the same, so it's easy for them to plug into that aspect of their faith formation; and so that was something that I insisted be developed basically for the benefit of the people. I certainly would not have known that, or would not have thought of that problem until I had been in the mix for a while.

Interviewer:

How much time do you spend at West Point?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

I come at least once a year; if I can, I come more than that. This is my second visit in this calendar year, so.

Interviewer:

Have you seen any changes in sort of the Cadets over the time that you've been coming here now, seven years? Have your impressions of the Cadets changed at all?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Well, actually, the ones that I've come into contact with, I would say that I had a very positive impression, and I continue to have a very positive impression. They're enthusiastic about their faith. They're young, obviously, by definition they're young, and obviously very intelligent, so that's very enriching to engage them in dialogue. The kinds of questions they ask I don't necessarily know if they'd be the same kinds of questions that they might ask on an ordinary college campus.

Interviewer:

Their experience following through this very regimented, hierarchical structure is not dissimilar from what you experienced yourself, obviously.

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Exactly. Exactly. And of course, I think the other thing that I'm always aware of in dealing with people who obviously are much younger than I am, is the fact that they're

people who are going to put their lives on the line, and that is always a very sobering thought. This young man or this young woman I'm talking to could be gone next year.

Interviewer:

Well, we've covered a lot of ground in the past hour.

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

My goodness.

Interviewer:

Any further thoughts; anything I should've asked and didn't?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

I'm grateful for the opportunity, and I think the experience of moving from basically a diplomatic role to a role with the military; in one sense, I feel that diplomacy was a good preparation. Also just dealing with the various levels of life that one is called to deal with. But I also think that for me pastorally, it's been a very good experience. The people that I meet and that I deal with in the military are exceptional men, women, and children, and it really is a privilege to minister to them. And I don't think I would've known that as someone - well, for one thing, I didn't live in the United States for 30 years. So I don't think I would've known that looking in very distantly from the outside. But ministering to them, my respect and my love for what these men and women do, and what they're willing to sacrifice, has become much greater.

Interviewer:

Are there any special concerns that you hear from people in your pastoral duties?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

There's certainly a concern for religious liberty, that that continue to be respected. I would never have thought when I was ordained a priest in the tranquil days of 1977, I would've never thought that insisting on First Amendment rights would be a part of my role. Of course, I didn't expect to be an archbishop, but I mean part of my role as a religious leader, and that is very definitely a -

Interviewer:

Could you explain a little bit?

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Well, I think that we've seen it with the Health and Human Services mandate, which as an episcopal conference, we've had to insist upon our rights. I think also in the whole issue of diversity, we have to insist on what Catholic teaching will allow a Catholic chaplain to do and not to do. And those are issues that perhaps I certainly didn't think would come up, at least as frequently as they do.

Interviewer:

Well, I'd like to thank you for your time.

Archbishop Timothy Broglio:

Oh, well, thank you very much for giving me this opportunity.

Interviewer:

My pleasure. Thank you.