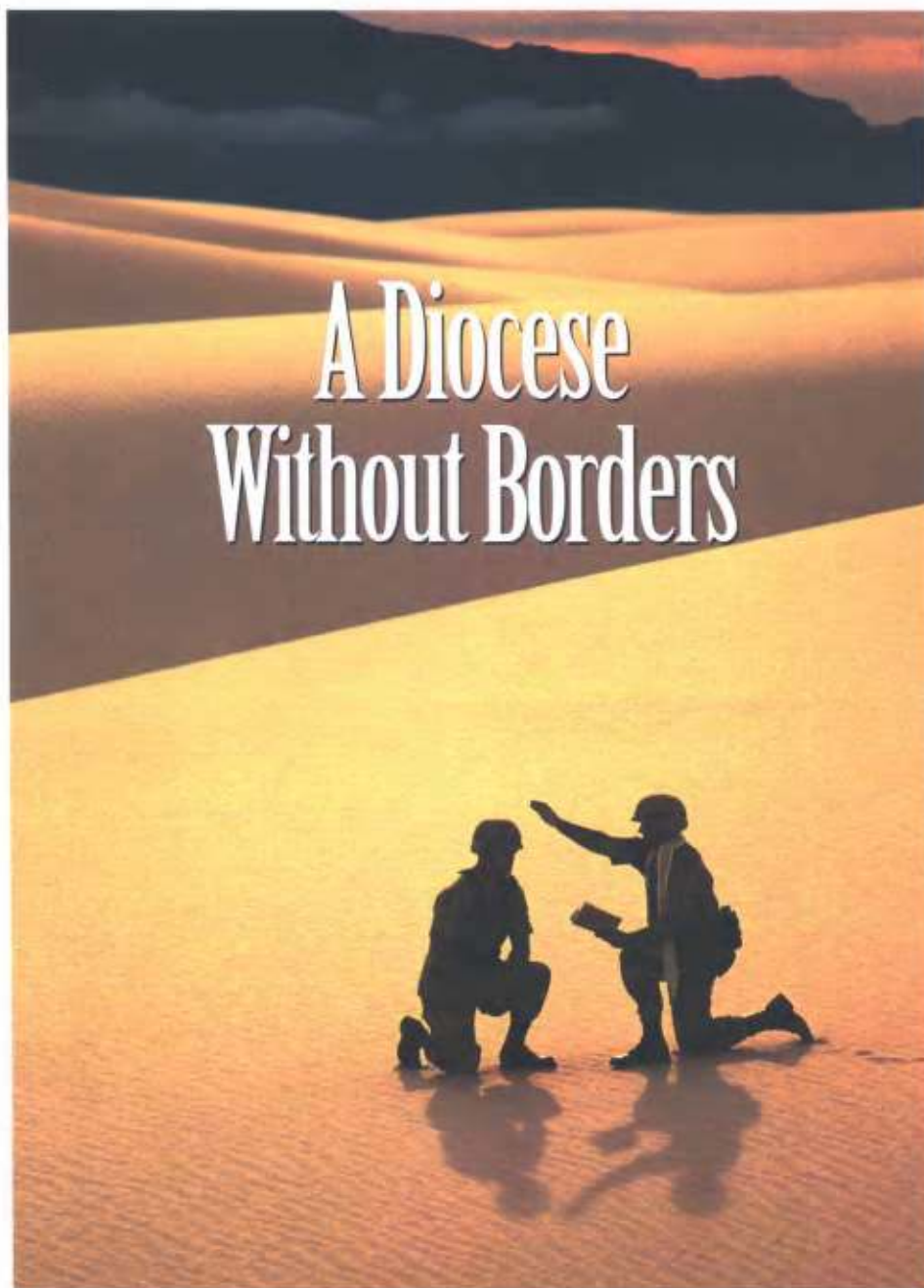




neighbors

WINTER 2002

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FROM MISSION AMERICA



A Diocese Without Borders

“**T**he global community, which our Archdiocese serves is a ‘Mission Community’ in the truest sense of the word,” said Archbishop Edwin O’Brien, who heads the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA. A diocese without territorial borders, it serves military personnel and families at 220 installations in 29 countries, patients in 172 Veterans Administration hospitals, and is responsible for federal employees serving in 134 countries. In providing pastoral care for more than 1.2 million Catholics worldwide, the archdiocese faces many unique challenges.

“The lack of trained lay ministers and the constant changing of parish members are our greatest concerns,” said Rev. Robert Gallagher, senior chaplain at Langley Air Force Base in Virginia. “Military base chapels differ sharply from U.S. parishes because every two or three years, military personnel and their families are reassigned. We can’t count on maintaining a solid core of loyal parishioners for decades.”

The base chapel also serves a younger, less-rooted constituency than a typical parish. At Little Creek

From The Chairman



Dear Friends,

Pope Paul VI said, "If you want peace, work for justice." The wisdom of this observation is self-evident. In the wake of the dreadful events of September, however, we realize that sometimes "working for justice" means military action to bring evildoers to account. Paradoxically, sometimes long-term peace can only be secured by the discriminate use of force.

The Committee on the Home Missions (CHM) has supported the Archdiocese for the Military Services for more than 70 years. The first grant was recorded on November 20, 1928, when the Committee gave \$15,000 to support chaplains serving hospitalized veterans of World War I. A generation later, during the dark days of World War II, CHM grants rose to \$100,000 a year. For the current year, we are giving \$125,000.

As described in this month's lead story, the Military Archdiocese provides chaplains for installations around the world while continuing to serve veterans' hospitals. This handful of priests offers spiritual guidance and pastoral care to young men and women cut off from family, friends, and familiar surroundings. Thousands are lonely and disoriented even in the best of times. Now they face the dangers of war.

Military personnel are highly vulnerable to the influence of secular culture and to proselytism by religious groups unfriendly to the Church. I agree with Archbishop O'Brien that military bases are deep mission fields whose needs must be met. Catholics have traditionally made up a significant portion of our country's armed forces, and that tradition is still vital today. Witness the number of Hispanics who serve, most of whom were raised in the faith. Even more strikingly, the chaplain at Quantico reports that fully 65 percent of all Marine officers are Catholics. These people deserve the support of their brothers and sisters in Christ.

Of course, a missionary's interest extends well beyond Catholics. It includes *going out to all the nations*. Indeed, the chaplain can hardly avoid doing so, since the modern military draws from every segment of American society. Many young people turn to the Church during their years of service, especially in unsettled times like these.

The Committee is proud of its commitment to helping support chaplains, who *serve those who serve*. It is a commitment we will continue to honor.

† Most Rev. Paul A. Zipfel
Bishop of Bismarck
Chairman
Committee on the Home Missions

DID YOU KNOW?



The Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA, serves 375,000 Catholic men and women in uniform, 520,000 family members, 204,000 Catholics in the Reserves and National Guard, 29,000 Catholic residents in Veterans Administration hospitals, and 66,000 Catholics in government service overseas.

The archdiocese has one of the largest religious education programs of any diocese. More than 75,000 children participate in the CCD programs, and thousands of adults participate in the RCIA and various forms of catechetics.

During 2000-2001, the archdiocese's pastoral outreach included 10,220 infant baptisms, 1,147 adult baptisms, 427 professions of faith, 3,141 first holy communions, 2,873 confirmations, and 1,506 marriages.

The priests serving full-time as chaplains are on loan from 51 dioceses and religious communities.

Archbishop Edwin O'Brien and his four auxiliary bishops visit annually more than 25 percent of all American installations throughout the world.

Remember the Missions

Your request to support the work of the Committee on the Home Missions may be made as follows:

To the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, for the exclusive purpose of assisting Roman Catholic home mission dioceses in the United States.



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"Our Lord of the Seas" stained glass window at the Naval Amphibious Base Chapel, Little Creek, Norfolk, Virginia.

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Naval Amphibious Base in Norfolk, Virginia, fully 85 percent of those who identify themselves as Catholic are between the ages of 18 and 25. Capt. Rev. Michael Diaz, one of the most senior Catholic chaplains in the Navy, struggles to connect with young people who have little understanding of their faith. "I search out

those who do not come to church and try to help sailors at Little Creek make sense of the chaos."

At the Quantico Marine Base in Virginia, Capt. Monsignor Patrick Fryer oversees a base chapel with five Masses for 1,300 parishioners on weekends, including one

for FBI agents who receive training at the base. The religious education program serves about 450 children, and 17 people participated in RCIA this past year. "My ministry is all-encompassing, ranging from marriage preparation for couples to joining the Marine officers in calisthenics on the field," said Monsignor Fryer.

By far the greatest concern, however, is for more chaplains. At present, only 366 full-time military chaplains in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard accompany men and women in uniform in sandy desert areas, on gray ships at sea, in crowded vehicles and on foot, and in chapels and wilderness areas.

"Increasingly, one priest is now expected to do the amount of work done by two or even three priests not so many years ago," said Archbishop O'Brien. "Our numbers are shrinking. We should have double the amount of priests we have now. A constant source of amaze-

Catholic Home Missions Awards \$125,000 to Military Archdiocese

The bishops' Committee on the Home Missions (CHM) awarded a record \$125,000 for 2001-2002 to the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA. Grant monies will be used to support the archdiocese's evangelization, youth ministry, and deacon formation programs.

The archdiocese receives no financial support from the U.S. government. It relies on the generosity of Catholics in the United States for help with its ministry programs.

Please help support our nation's military chaplains who serve those who serve. Contribute to the annual Catholic Home Missions Appeal, which will be taken up in most dioceses on April 28, 2002.

ment and encouragement to me as I visit all our Services is the initiative, enthusiasm, and stamina of our laity who increasingly are stepping up to work with our priests."

Whether celebrating Mass in the bush on a makeshift altar set on cardboard boxes, running with the troops on base, or participating in airborne operations abroad, military chaplains rub shoulders with young soldiers and sailors who are far from home. They are indeed missionaries on the front lines. ■





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Committee on the Home Missions

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

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COMMITTEE ON THE HOME MISSIONS Who Are We?

The bishops' Committee on the Home Missions was founded as the American Board of Catholic Missions in 1924. In cooperation with the Black and Indian Missions Board (1885) and the Catholic Church Extension Society (1905), the Committee provides financial support for missionary activities that strengthen and extend the presence of the Church in the United States and its island territories in the Caribbean and the Pacific. The principal beneficiaries of the annual Catholic Home Missions Appeal are approximately 80 home

mission dioceses, which include the Eastern Catholic Church eparchies.

Bishop Paul A. Zipfel, *Chairman*
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WANT
TO SEE
MORE?

We invite you to take an Internet journey to a few of our home missions and learn what's happening in their part of the country. Just log on to www.usccb.org/hm and click on **Stories and Pictures from the Field**.