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Archbishop Timothy Broglio of the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services greets a U.S. Nav

Archbishop Timothy Broglio of the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services celebrates the annual Sea Services Pilgrimage Mass at the National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Emmitsburg, Md., Oct. 2. He was elected president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Nov. 15 during the group's fall general assembly in Baltimore. (CNS/Jason Minick, courtesy of Devine Partners)

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Five years after the release of Pope Francis' encyclical on fraternal love, and amid a rise in political violence, the leader of the U.S. Catholic bishops is pleading for a rediscovery of — and respect for — a common humanity.

"I ask every American to reflect on the value of every human life. I beg you to see Christ in every person, even those whose politics you oppose," said Archbishop Timothy Broglio, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The archbishop, who also leads the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services, shared his thoughts in an Oct. 1 pastoral invitation for reflection ahead of the fifth anniversary of Fratelli Tutti. Francis penned the encyclical and released it Oct. 3,

2020, as an exploration and exhortation on the issues of human fraternity and social friendship.

The late pope noted that his encyclical — which focused on a topic about which he had frequently spoken — was partly inspired by his own fraternal encounters with leaders of other faith traditions: Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I and Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, one of the pre-eminent Sunni Muslim scholars in the world.

Quoting the late pope, Broglio said the encyclical "prophetically" observed that the world must rebuild its sense of communion, and that the erosion of social communion leads to humans being manipulated by the powerful. He referenced the late pope's warning in the encyclical on how great words — the pontiff gave "democracy, freedom, justice or unity" as examples — have been emptied of their meaning, bent and shaped "to serve as tools for domination, as meaningless tags that can be used to justify any action."

"We have seen the manifestation of this notion in the perverse idea that one can serve the common good by becoming an instrument of violence," he said. "This happens when we refuse to see the face of Christ in the other person and only see an enemy that must be dominated or destroyed."

He said, "Tragically, decent people of every political persuasion continue to fall victim to this deadly trend."

Broglio pointed to his experience ministering to military members and their families, saying, "I have known the pain that the violence of war inflicts on men and women and those closest to them."

Now, he said, "grievous acts of violence have intruded into the daily lives of too many Americans — an experience that, tragically, many civilians around the world have long endured.

"Places once regarded as safe harbors to grow and learn — our schools, universities, and churches — have become sites of heartbreaking tragedy and bloodshed," said Broglio.

While he did not name any specific incidents, the archbishop's reflection was released just days after several high-profile killings, including deadly targeted

attacks on a Latter-day Saints church in Michigan and a Catholic church in Minnesota, and the assassination of conservative political activist Charlie Kirk at a Utah university campus.

Princeton University's Bridging Divides Initiative, a research and policy development effort to mitigate political violence, predicted that 2025 would be "a bellwether year for political violence" in the U.S., with rising threats against local officials and communities, and a deepening "climate of hostility in American politics."

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International online research firm YouGov, which since 2022 has polled on how extensive a problem respondents perceive political violence to be in the U.S., has found that levels of concern depend "to some degree" on "whether someone from their side or from the other side is the most recent to be attacked."

Broglio, quoting from Fratelli Tutti, said that "authentic reconciliation does not flee from conflict, but is achieved in conflict, resolving it through dialogue and open, honest and patient negotiation."

As Francis wrote in the encyclical, said the archbishop, "the path to social unity always entails acknowledging the possibility that others have, at least in part, a legitimate point of view, something worthwhile to contribute, even if they were in error or acted badly."

The late pope stressed that peace "requires us to place at the center of all political, social, and economic activity the human person from conception to natural death, who enjoys the highest dignity, and respect for the common good."

"Each of us should examine our hearts, our thoughts, and our actions and ask ourselves how we contribute to the polarization and animosity plaguing our nation," Broglio said.

That self-reflection should be accompanied by concrete actions to mend a wounded society, he said.

"We should also put into practice those behaviors that can help us begin to heal the rifts between us," said Broglio, recommending in particular the corporal works of

mercy, which along with their spiritual counterparts are described in Catholic teaching as "charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbor in his spiritual and bodily necessities."

The corporal works of mercy listed by Broglio in his reflection included "feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, sheltering the homeless, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and burying the dead."

Along with such outreach, said the archbishop, "Consider fasting from social media for one day a week or in the evening."

In addition, he said, "Pray for your enemies," referencing a command given by Jesus Christ to his followers during both the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:38-48) and the Sermon on the Plain (Lk. 6:27-35).

"Listen and talk with those with whom you disagree — especially within your own family," said Broglio. "Disagree, debate civilly, stand for your rights, but always remember in your heart that we are all children of God and deserve dignity and life."

The archbishop concluded his reflection with a call to pray "that we may discover anew that all are important and all are necessary, different faces of the one humanity that God so loves. Amen."

The USCCB is also providing Catholics with a variety of resources to help implement the vision of Fratelli Tutti on its fifth anniversary. These include information on its CivilizeIt initiative, the "Fratelli Tutti Study Guide," resources on Catholic social teaching and the corporal works of mercy, all of which can be found on its website, usccb.org.