



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on September 20, 2013

Military Archdiocese Confirms: No Same-Sex Military Weddings

The archbishop who oversees Catholic ministry in the U.S. military has confirmed that Catholic chaplains will not be forced by government edict to perform same-sex wedding ceremonies among the troops or be involved in other activities that would imply their approval of homosexuality.

Earlier this summer the Supreme Court overturned the federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) that defined marriage as only between a man and a woman relative to government business. That ruling has led to a non-stop barrage of same-sex pairing ceremonies in every branch of the military. In a [September 17](#) statement Archbishop Timothy Broglio (shown) said that such changes in U.S. law required him to reiterate the Church's teaching on homosexuality, which informs the actions of chaplains in their religious duties.



"No Catholic priest or deacon may be forced by any authority to witness or bless the union of couples of the same gender," Broglio said in the statement. He added that no priest could be required to assist at a "Strong Bonds" or other marriage retreat event "if that gathering is also open to couples of the same gender."

He directed that "a priest who is asked to counsel non-Catholic parties in a same-gendered relationship will direct them to a chaplain who is able to assist. Catholic parties will, of course, be encouraged by the priest to strive to live by the teaching of the Gospel."

The military archbishop noted that while Scripture exhorts priests "to be all things to all people," a disservice would be rendered "if the truth of the Gospel is confused by the actions of those ordained to disseminate that truth."

In addition to same-sex marriages, Broglio said, Catholic chaplains may not be required to participate in such events as military retirements, changes of command, or promotion ceremonies if doing so would require that he acknowledge or approve of a same-gender "spouse."

As for funerals, the archbishop noted that while "the tradition of the Catholic Church always tries to find reasons to bury the dead, a priest may not be placed in a situation where his assistance at a funeral for a Catholic would give the impression that the Church approves of same sex 'marital' relationships."

Broglio exhorted chaplains that as "members of the Church founded by Jesus Christ to meet the needs of the baptized and to proclaim that good news about the salvation given by Him, we are also aware of His clear teaching about the danger of scandal (Mt. 18:6). This world is a pilgrimage to life without end.



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At the conclusion of our walk through life we must stand before the Throne of Grace to give an accounting of our fidelity.”

The archbishop’s statement comes on the heels of a similar clarification by the organization overseeing chaplains with the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), the denomination with the most active military chaplains. In early September the SBC’s North American Mission Board (NAMB) [issued a statement](#) clarifying that SBC military chaplains were prohibited in every case from officiating at same-sex “weddings” or participating in any other events that promote or sanction homosexuality.

The NAMB statement emphasized what has always been the SBC’s policy, that Southern Baptist military chaplains may not “conduct or attend a wedding ceremony for any same-sex couple, bless such a union, or perform counseling in support of such a union, assist or support paid contractors or volunteers leading same-sex relational events, nor offer any kind of relationship training or retreat, on or off of a military installation, that would give the appearance of accepting the homosexual lifestyle or sexual wrongdoing.”

The SBC policy also prohibits chaplains from participating in joint worship services “with a chaplain, contractor or volunteer who personally practices a homosexual lifestyle or affirms a homosexual lifestyle or such conduct.”

NAMB president Kevin Ezell noted that “for many members of our military — especially those deployed around the globe — our chaplains are the only pastors they have. That’s why it is so important that they uphold sound doctrine, while showing everyone the love and forgiveness Jesus offers. We all need to be committed to praying for them in these challenging days.”



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