

## **FRONTLINE FAITH**

### **SAMPLE Message Following Mass to Parishioners**

**--To be submitted to Pastor for approval prior to Masses--**

<<*Audio File: "...Our commanding officers were very God-fearing men, and their first orders were that we have a church service every Sunday at noon. Every Sunday, we prayed an Our Father and recited the Pledge of Allegiance and Twenty-third Psalm. Of course we prayed all the time because God was our help in every way, but at 12 noon on Sunday, we knew that every other POW, even those in the torture cells, were praying that church service...and this was a source of tremendous strength." — Quote from Captain Guy Gruters, USAF*>>

The story you just heard is from Air Force Captain Guy D. Gruters. During the Vietnam War, he flew over 400 missions and was shot down twice. The second time, he was captured and held for five years and three months in Communist POW camps, including the infamous Hanoi Hilton. He and his fellow prisoners of war experienced unspeakable torture and hardship—deprived of even the most basic human needs...but, as he said, despite all they suffered, their faith was a tremendous source of strength.

Fast forward to today. Ladies and gentlemen, did you know that U.S. troops can sometimes go for seven to nine months without hearing a Mass or words of comfort from a chaplain priest? Think about it—that would be the same as you and me being deprived of Mass or Holy Eucharist until next December. Suffering spiritual deprivation along with daily assaults to their physical and moral safety, service men and women endure grievous hardships in the line of duty.

Let me tell you one young lieutenant's story. At 18, he entered the Army and went to Afghanistan. He served there for 15 months...and then he was injured. In tears, this tough guy worried because he doesn't know how a soldier can die in combat in a state of grace. He described how difficult it is to live one's faith during deployment and, when you fail, how desperate it is to be in isolation without priests. He's trying to figure out how to lead men in battle and be a good Catholic man with morals, dignity, and faith.

Sadly, this young man's story is like that of many serving in our armed forces. Committed to being excellent soldiers, patriotic Americans, and faithful Catholics, many of our soldiers struggle to find a balance, a point of spiritual equilibrium.

Mary's Touch Multimedia is committed to help. We are a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization located in Austin, TX. You may recognize us. We produce the *Mary's Touch* radio program. We are devoted to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

In 2009, we started the FRONTLINE FAITH Project to bring compact MP3 players preloaded with Catholic content, especially as it pertains to military service, to members of our armed forces currently deployed or returning from deployment, with special emphasis on injured troops and troops stationed in Iraq or Afghanistan.

The FRONTLINE FAITH Players include audio renditions of the Mass, various homilies, prayers just for those serving, Christian music, and testimonies from other soldiers about the struggles and victories of their faith journeys...like the story you just heard from Air

Force Captain Guy D. Gruters because, forty-five years later, the circumstances have changed, but the needs have not.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Most Reverend Timothy Broglio, Archbishop for the Military Services has told us, "The task of fortifying and consolidating an authentic Catholic presence among the military is really the responsibility of the whole Church." We invite you to join us in this mission of love. Help us serve the unmet spiritual needs of the men and women who so valiantly protect us. They are our sons and daughters, our brothers and sisters, our husbands and wives. Together, we are one with them in the Body of Christ. When even one of them is hurting, we all suffer.

There are 300,000 Catholics serving in our U.S. military.  
There are 281 Catholic Chaplains currently serving our troops.  
For a donation of \$24, you can put a FRONTLINE FAITH Player in the hands of one of our troops.  
Envelopes are available in the pews.

Together, let's put our faith on the frontlines.

Thank you.