



Focus on Religious Freedom

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Catholic Veterans at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center No Longer Guaranteed Catholic Pastoral Care

**By Andrea M Piccotti-Bayer
National Catholic Register**

Roughly 20% of our military personnel are Catholics. Thanks to an incomprehensible decision by the hospital, if they or their dependents end up at Walter Reed, they are no longer guaranteed ready access to the Church's sacraments.

Just days before Holy Week, Walter Reed ended its contract for pastoral care with the Franciscan friars of Holy Name College in nearby Silver Spring, Maryland. Incredibly, they are being replaced by a secular government contractor that offers a wide range of specialists in “administrative and religious staffing.” In other words, they are not necessarily priests, and therefore cannot administer the sacraments often asked for by Catholics in the hospital: celebration of the Holy Mass, confession, anointing of the sick, and last rites.

Archbishop for the Military Services Timothy Broglio, elected president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops last year, is not happy, to put it mildly — and the hospital should be warned that he is a formidable defender of the Catholics in his care. He says it is “incomprehensible” that essential pastoral care is being taken away from the sick and the aged and that the new contracting group “cannot provide the necessary service.”

<https://www.ncregister.com/commentaries/the-tone-deaf-development-at-walter-reed>

James 5:15 “And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven.”