

**Memorial Day Mass
San Fernando Cemetery III
May 28, 2018**

Our nation pauses on this Memorial Day to remember the lives and the sacrifice of all those brave men and women who gave their life in defense of our country. Not only do we offer our gratitude for that sacrifice, but we renew our hope in the resurrection from the dead. May we make this day truly a day to remember.

The sacrifice of one who lays down his or her life for another is something that should never be taken for granted. The scriptures call it the greatest love someone can show. It was the love Jesus showed for us. It is a sad truth that there is war and violence in this world. Our military women and men recognize that sad fact, but also know that their fellow Americans are counting on their protection. So, they go voluntarily into dangerous places and put their lives on the line for us. Today we remember those who gave their lives for us. Many of you are here to remember family members and friends. But we also remember those who laid down their lives for strangers, all because they felt the call to protect us.

The Gospel today talks about leaving behind all that distracts us from the Lord. May the witness of these fallen military men and women remind us of the gravity of that command of the Lord. We cannot be Christians in a casual way. Following the Lord requires all of us. It may seem impossible at times, but as Jesus said, "All things are possible for God." May we honor our fallen brothers and sisters in arms by living our lives in a self-sacrificing way. May we think of the other before we think of ourselves. May we be willing to sacrifice for those in need, thinking like God thinks and not like the world.

But there is another message from the scriptures and from our national celebration today. We remember the power and the promise of the Resurrection. Our military personnel know well that in this life we “have to suffer through various trials.” But our faith reminds us that “an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, [is] kept in heaven for [us]” (1 Pet). This is why today can be a celebration. Death brings us sorrow and grief. We miss those who have gone before. We miss those who gave their lives for us. But death is not the end of us. Pope Francis reminds us of the truth of the Gospel: “We Christians believe and know that Christ’s Resurrection is the true hope of the world, the hope that does not disappoint.”

So may today truly be a day of remembrance. May we remember those who gave their lives, and honor that sacrifice – learning from them how we are to sacrifice of ourselves to bring peace and unity to our world so torn by hatred and division. And may we remember the truth of the Resurrection. This is our faith which is more precious than gold. This is the faith that brings us hope, which brings hope to the world. This is the faith that will never disappoint. Remember well, brothers and sisters, and live as people of hope and charity.