

Memorial Day Homily

May 30, 2019

This morning we gather in these hallowed grounds, here and around the world, which embraces our loved ones as they await the promised return of the Resurrected Lord at the end of time. “I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may also be.” (John 14:3). These words are most appropriate as we gather on this celebration of Memorial Day, a day that summons us to remember in this hour all those who have given their lives to defend the truths that this great nation holds—the truth that all men and women are created equal. That we are endowed by our Creator with inalienable rights—to life, liberty and to the pursuit of happiness.

It is these men and women we remember today who died defending these truths. They died, not in their home towns but on a battlefield of war for you and me. Their sacrifice makes it possible for us to be here today in peace and freedom that they believed in and defended at all costs, yes, ‘to laying down their lives’ for the love of their country. This is one of the greatest acts of self-sacrifice and love one can ever ask for. They were people of great love.

Memorial Day is a day of remembrance. We are asked to keep alive the lives of so many men and women, who totally and unselfishly gave their lives for our country and its freedom we revel in today. It was not a sacrifice focusing on themselves, as they went out into the fields and trenches to fight for this land.

If there is one thing that sustained those on the battlefields of all the wars ever fought, it was their trust in God. He became their refuge and fortress. So, we ask our God today to raise up in joy and new resurrected life all those who have died serving in our Armed Forces.

We must pray for all those currently serving in our Armed Forces and are in harm's way today. We pray that our countries leaders will use the wisdom of God to lead them to make decisions for the betterment of all humanity: "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him." (Ephesians 1:17-18) In addition, we pray for a just and lasting peace, prompted by the mercy of Jesus. We are called to be peacemakers: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God." (Matthew. 5:9).

Even though we are not all called to military service, we are summoned by God to seek better ways of bringing peace in order to better the lives of all our brothers and sisters.

We need to love more, to pray more, and perform small works of charity to those around us and those beyond us. It is the little things we do for others that 'catch' the eye of the Lord.

Finally we remember the faith of those who died for us by serving our country. May our faith increase as a result of their faith that was selfless, God centered, and focused on liberty, justice and peace for all!

And may the Mother of the Son of God, who gave us the perfect peacemaker, continue to watch over us as our Queen of Peace. May she

Intercede for those who have fallen asleep in war, and help those of us who remain behind to be aware of our 'hour' of death, by which she promises to be with us!

The words from the hymn "The Battle Hymn of the Republic", beautifully summarizes the vision of those who have gone before us with the words: "Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord."

And may their souls, and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace! Amen!