



From the Pastor's Desk

This past Thursday we celebrated "Veterans' Day". I hope you all took the opportunity to thank a Veteran for serving or having served in defense of the freedoms we all enjoy and our belief that those freedoms are the God-given right of every person around the world. When you stand back and observe war, or observe it through a loved one who is who is "in the battle zone" it's a challenge to think of anything else but the life and safety of your (our) loved ones. I think we can safely say that the challenge is seen in the faces of all families and friends, from every nation throughout the world who share this same experience of family and friends serving in the military.

Someone (and I can't remember who) said, "Seek peace always, go to war rarely." That is and should always be our goal as God's people and as a nation. But wars are inevitable when people place their own selfish desires for domination and power ahead of the sacredness of human life and the dignity and rights of people as children of a God who gave those rights to us by virtue of creation. You have heard me quote these words from "The Declaration of Independence" before, and I don't care what people say about who our founding fathers are, and what variety of beliefs they had. They were written and signed to create independence and freedom from tyranny for all people, "*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.*"

Freedom is not free. It comes at a price, yes, even the price of the shedding of blood and even death, the "sacrifice" of one's life for the sake of us all. "Greater love than this has no man, than to lay down his life for his friends." Lest we forget, Jesus Christ died on a cross, he shed his blood, and he surrendered his life, in defense of his teachings about the dignity and rights of all of God, the Father's children. Do we realize that the reason individuals and "special interest groups" are attempting to eradicate God from our nation and our world is because as long as He exists, we are all held accountable to the truths of life that He has revealed, in and through Christ and His Church.

As recently as last Saturday, November 6th, Pope Benedict XVI speaking in Spain said, "***God exists and he has given us life.***" *the Holy Father affirmed to the thousands present. "He alone is absolute, faithful and unfailing love, that infinite goal that is glimpsed behind the good, the true and the beautiful things of this world, admirable indeed, but insufficient for the human heart. St. Teresa of Jesus understood this when she wrote: 'God alone suffices.' "... "God is the origin of our being and the foundation and apex of our freedom, not its opponent. How can mortal man build a firm foundation and how can the sinner be reconciled with himself? How can it be that there is public silence with regard to the first and essential reality of human life? How can what is most decisive in life be confined to the purely private sphere or banished to the shadows? **We cannot live in darkness**, without seeing the light of the sun. How is it then that God, who is the light of every mind, the power of every will and the magnet of every heart, be denied the right to propose the light that dissipates all darkness? This is why **we need to hear God** once again under the skies of Europe; **may this holy word not be spoken in vain**, and may it not be put at the service of purposes other than its own. **It needs to be spoken in a holy way.** And we must hear it in this way in ordinary life, in the silence of work, in brotherly love and in the difficulties that years bring on.*

It is God who has been at the heart of every action - as frightening as it was and is - that bring our men and women into the battle fields of the towns and villages of the world. It is looking into the frightened eyes of children, women and men who live in daily threat of their fragile lives, that makes members of our nation's military fill with patriotic zeal as they fight to protect and defend the poor and the weak, to feed and clothe them and to help them restore some semblance of order to their otherwise destitute and disillusioned lives. Freedom is not free and just as Christ paid the price, so do our men and women of the military place their lives on the line each day somewhere around the world. As a returning GI recently said at our Veterans' Day Symposium, "We are not here to discuss the reason or validity of any war. We are here to let you know that the price of freedom is worth it. If going to war means that you can go to the Mall and walk around without fear of terrorist attack then I'm willing to do it... and so has everyone up here been willing to do."

It's never too late to say "Thank You for serving our nation." **THANK YOU VETERANS FOR SERVING OUR NATION, AND FOR PAYING THE PRICE OF FREEDOM.**

May God +bless you and yours today and forever,

Father Anthony