



The Holy See

HOLY MASS IN COMMEMORATION OF THE FALLEN

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

Rome War Cemetery, Rome

Thursday, 2 November 2023

[Multimedia]

The celebration of a day such as today leads us to two thoughts: *remembrance* and *hope*.

Remembrance of those who preceded us, who led their life, who concluded this life; remembrance of the many people who were good to us: in the family, among friends... And also remembrance of those who did not manage to do so much good, but who have been received in God's memory, in God's mercy. It is the mystery of the Lord's great mercy.

And then *hope*. Today is a day of remembrance in order to look forward, to look at our journey, our path. We walk towards an encounter, with the Lord and with everyone. And we must ask the Lord for this grace of hope: the hope that never lets us down; the hope that is the everyday virtue that carries us forward, that helps us to solve problems and to look for ways out. But always forward, forward. That fruitful hope, that every-day theological virtue, one for any moment: I will call it a theological virtue of "the kitchen", because it is approachable and always comes to our aid. Hope never disappoints: we live in this tension between memory and hope.

I would like to consider something that happened to me at the entrance. I was looking at the age of the fallen. The majority were between 20 and 30 years old. Lives cut short, lives without a future. And I thought of the parents, of the mothers who received that letter: "Madam, I have the honour of informing you that your son is a hero". "Yes, a hero, but they have taken him away from me". So many tears in those lives cut short. And I could not but think of today's wars. The same thing is happening today too: so many people, young and not so young... In the wars of the world, even in

those closest to us, in Europe and outside: so many dead! Life is destroyed without awareness.

Today, thinking of the dead, preserving the memory of the dead and preserving hope, let us ask the Lord for peace, that people may no longer be killed in wars. So many innocent dead, so many soldiers who leave their lives behind. But why is this? Wars are always a defeat, always. There is no total victory, no. Yes, one conquers the other, but beneath there is always the defeat of the price that is paid. Let us pray to the Lord for our departed, for everyone, for everyone: may the Lord receive them all. And let us also pray for the Lord to have pity on us and give us hope: the hope to press on and to be able to find them all together with Him, when He calls us. So be it.

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