

## **32nd Sunday (T21) C** **Remembrance Sunday (Requiem for War Dead)**

We are offering this Mass today for the souls of those who have lost their lives in conflict. We do this advisedly, it is a work of mercy to pray for these souls who are making their way to the place prepared for them. But in doing so we have to acknowledge a failure - a failure of humanity to live in peace.

*Our Lady has told us without qualification that war is a punishment for sin. War is the result of our sinful, disordered nature. Sin, be it greed, lust, pride, envy, or any of the others, is the ultimate cause of war. We know this, don't we? - we know what happens to our lives and to those others around us, when we sin.*

*On the other hand, the defence of what is good and true, of those who are helpless and whose God-given rights are violated is good - and virtuous.*

Thinking about death is an important part of the Christian life. It would be easy both to become downhearted at the utter tragedy of the pain and suffering that we see in the world, and then avoid thinking about these things altogether, to hide from them.

Yet we Christians are the most blessed and fortunate of people, because we have an answer to death. We know

where it comes from and we know that it is not the last word. We have been taught by our loving God how to live our lives under His blessing, to live with a dauntless hope founded in Our Lord's victory of the cross.

The Sadducees in today's Gospel have failed absolutely to understand what are the implications of the Resurrection and they also fail therefore to understand the implications of the resurrection for living daily life. This reminds us of the confusion and ignorance in our own day about this. Without the Christian faith what underpins how we live our daily lives, falls apart. We must have the courage to bear witness to this Good News.

At times of war, or any human struggle, we witness both the worst and best of humanity. Under their persecution the righteous Maccabees, like our blessed martyrs, were prepared to suffer torture and death rather than live as apostates, contrary to their faith. They knew, as we do, that the reward of faith is eternal joy and blessedness, whereas the reward of faithlessness is to exist without them.

We live in a world writhing under the tortuous turmoil of sin. This is where all the strife and war comes from. And we play our part. That lie we told the other day, that unkind or thoughtless word, that insisting on our own way, - little things, maybe, but each one eats away at the harmony and peace of our own and our neighbours', our

families', our loved ones' lives. It all makes a difference, it all adds up. And makes fertile ground for far bigger, graver sins.

If we grow up without respect for others, and these sins destroy this respect, then it is all the easier to steal, murder, defraud and so forth. Then we have politicians without sufficient moral compass to make good decisions and we end up with the neglect of the poor and sick, war, terrorism, oppression.

The Church has always taught that Christians should be people of peace, but that we should also champion the cause of the weak and poor, the victim, the suffering, the persecuted. We should be prepared to defend the good, sometimes, if necessary at whatever cost to ourselves.

*It is true that war is a punishment for sin. However, as with everything that is evil, a faithful Catholic, with the help of God's grace, can bring good out of the evil. After all, we are members of the Church Militant. When we received the Sacrament of Confirmation, we became "soldiers of Christ." The Church has excellent reasons for using these war-like phrases. In order to save our souls, we must "fight the good fight." The reality is that our fallen world includes war. In the spiritual sense, in order to save our souls, we must wage war against Satan and his legions. And this is what we are doing every time we*

come to Mass, every time we confess our sins, every time we pray the rosary, every time we do some good and charitable thing. This is how you play your part, how you make the world a better, more Godly, more peaceful place.

So, today in remembering and praying for those who have died in conflict, we acknowledge the many who suffered and died in the defence of justice and peace. We also acknowledge our own and others' struggles. And we need to acknowledge both our own sinfulness and the joyful healing for sin that comes as we confess and are reconciled. As children of our loving Father whose love is greater than any evil that we find in the world and whose forgiveness can heal even the gravest of sins we have a part to play in the healing of families, communities, nations and the world. We are agents of love - it is our mission as individual Catholics to be different. And if this brings us into conflict with the evils that surround us, let us take heart, for as Jesus says, **"In the world you will have trouble, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."**

St. Paul says in today's second reading:

**"(But) The Lord is faithful; he will strengthen you and guard you from evil. ...**

**May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ." 2 Thessalonians 3:1-5**