

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE



BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIEGE
PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLIS

BOLLETTINO

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

N. 171102a

Thursday 02.11.2017

Celebration of Holy Mass at the American cemetery of Nettuno

At 14.45 this afternoon, on the Commemoration of All Souls, the Holy Father Francis celebrated Holy Mass at the American Cemetery of Nettuno. Upon arrival, the Pope placed a white rose on ten tombs, including those of an unknown soldier, an Italian-American and a Jew, and was then greeted in the sacristy by the Bishop of Albano, H.E. Msgr. Marcello Semeraro; the director of the Cemetery, Ms. Melanie Resto; the mayor of Nettuno, Angelo Casto; and the deputy Mayor of Anzio, Giorgio Zucchini.

At 15.00 the Holy Father celebrated Holy Mass.

The following is the homily that the Holy Father pronounced during the Eucharistic celebration at the American Cemetery at Nettuno:

Homily of the Holy Father

We are all gathered here today in hope. Each one of us, in his own heart, can repeat the words of Job, which we heard in the first reading: "I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will stand upon the earth". The hope of meeting God again, of meeting all of us again, like brothers; and this hope never lets us down. Paolo was strong in that expression in the second reading: "Hope does not disappoint us".

But hope very often conceals and places its roots in many human scourges, in many human sufferings, and in that moment of pain, of wounds, of suffering, He makes us look to Heaven and say, "I believe that my Redeemer lives, But stop, Lord". And this is the prayer that perhaps comes from all of us, when we look at this cemetery. "I am sure, Lord, that these brothers of ours are with you. I am sure", we say this. "But please, Lord, stop. No more. No more war. No more pointless slaughter", as Benedict XV said. It is better to hope without this destruction: young people in their thousands, thousands, thousands, thousands ... broken hopes. "No more, Lord". And we must say this today, as we pray for all the deceased, but in this place we pray in a special way for these young people: today that the world is again at war, and prepares to do so even more strongly. "No more, Lord. No more". With war, one loses everything.

There comes to my mind that elderly woman who, looking at the ruins of Hiroshima, with wise resignation but also with pain, with that mournful resignation that women know how to live, as it is their charism, said, "Men do everything to declare and make war, and in the end they destroy themselves". This is war: the destruction of ourselves. Certainly that elderly woman had lost children and grandchildren there; there remained only the wounded heart and tears. And if today is a day of hope, today is also a day of tears. Tears like those shed by women when the post arrived: "Madam, you have the honour that your husband was a martyr to the homeland; that your sons are heroes of the homeland". They are tears that humanity must not forget today. This pride of this humanity that has not learned its lesson and seems not to want to learn it!

When many times in history men decide to make war, they are convinced that they bring a new world, they are convinced of bringing a "springtime". Yet it ends in winter, ugly, cruel, with the reign of terror and death. Today let us pray for all the deceased, all of them, but in a special way for the young, at a time in which so many die in the battles that take place every day in this piecemeal war. Let us pray also for the dead of today, those who die in war, even children and the innocent. This is the fruit of war: death. And may the Lord give us the grace to weep.
