

THOUGHTS FROM YOUR PASTOR: Veterans' Day....and Month of the Dead

Today, in the civic life of our nation, we observe **Veterans' Day**, and we give thanks to all who have served our great Republic by defending our country. Our veterans have risked their lives to ensure that our liberties are secure, and they have made many sacrifices in so doing. During our time on this Earth as disciples of Jesus, we are grateful for living in a country which was founded upon a belief in God and a belief that humans have dignity as made in God's image and likeness, and the belief that we should have the liberty to pursue our relationship with the Lord and the pursuit of holiness without interference or hindrance. Such liberties are not a "given" in many parts of the world, and so we thank our veterans for helping to ensure that our Republic can endure securely for the benefit of generations to come.

As wonderful as it is to be citizens of our earthy nation, the USA, as Catholic we also look forward to being citizens of another realm: the Kingdom of Heaven. As Jesus constantly reminds us, this world is not all there is. As creations of God, we are meant for eternity long beyond the limits of time and space here on Earth. This month of November, which began with All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day, is known as the **Month of the Dead**, and is a chance for us as Catholics to focus even more on our preparation for being citizens of Heaven. We ask for the saints to pray for us in our daily spiritual battle for holiness. We pray for the souls still in purgatory awaiting full entry into Heaven after their final necessary purification from minor sins that were still on their souls at death. We ask Jesus to help us to find comfort in our grief and loss of our loved ones.

But this Month of the Dead can also be a chance for us to learn about the **practical matters relating to our own death or the imminent death of a loved one**. The Catholic Church offers a host of practical wisdom on things like 'end-of-life' medical moral decisions (not all options allowed for by hospitals or doctors are moral or respectful of the dignity of human life); living wills (be very careful about the "templates" that are available, for the same reasons); funeral planning (e.g., cremation is allowed for serious reasons, but not really preferred by the Catholic Church), etc. etc. A great resource for many of these end-of-life questions is the National Catholic Bioethics Center from Philadelphia (www.ncbcenter.org). Or simply come and speak with me, as I have a specific interest in bioethics, and I have many resources here "in-house" that I can share. There is a lot of confusion out there, but the Catholic Church has developed a very consistent, Gospel- and science-based approach to these difficult issues. May we pray for our dead, show compassion to our terminally-ill, and prepare for our own transition to being one day citizens of Heaven with great hope and love!

Fr. Ferguson is available to help you with any questions or concerns you may have; please contact him at hamilton.college@outlook.com or at 419-634-2626.

THOUGHTS FOR OUR PARISH CHILDREN by "Jackie", the Pastor's Cat



Hi boys and girls! My name is "Jackie", and as you know, I am Father Ferguson's cat! Today is a special day! That's right! It is "Veterans' Day"! A veteran is someone who has helped defend our nation from the bad guys around the world who try to take away our freedoms and liberties. It's almost like someone at school who stands up for you and protects you from the mean bullies who try to hurt you! I know what it is like to be bullied....many times I try to go outside, and other cats try to fight me and meow mean things at me! It's no fun! I like to be able to walk around my backyard in freedom. A veteran helps fight the bad guys around the world, so we can safely walk around our great nation in peace.....to be able to live where you want and serve God in your life and play with your friends and eat ice cream and tuna fish and nap in the sun without some terrorist (a bad guy!) hurting you! This week, ask your dad or mom if they know a veteran, and thank them for their service to our nation! Have a "purr"-fect week!