



The Holy See

HOLY MASS IN COMMEMORATION OF THE FALLEN

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

American Cemetery, Nettuno

Thursday, 2 November 2017

[Multimedia]

We have all gathered here today in hope. Each one of us, in his or her heart, can repeat Job's words that we heard in the first Reading: "I know that my Redeemer lives, and at last he will stand upon the earth". The hope of re-encountering God, of all of us meeting again, as brothers and sisters: and this hope does not disappoint. Paul's expression in the second Reading was powerful: "Hope does not disappoint".

But so often hope is born and sets its roots in many human wounds, in so much human affliction. That moment of pain, of grief, of suffering makes us look to Heaven and say: "I believe that my Redeemer lives. But stop, Lord". This is the prayer that perhaps rises from us all, when we look at this cemetery. "I am certain, Lord, that these brothers and sisters of ours are with you. I am certain". We say this. "But please, Lord, stop. No more. No more war. No more of this 'senseless slaughter'", as Benedict xv said. Better to hope without this destruction: young people ... thousands, thousands, thousands, thousands ... shattered hopes. "No more, Lord". We must say this today, as we pray for all the departed, but in this place let us pray in a special way for these young people; today as the world is once more at war and is preparing to engage more aggressively in war. "No more, Lord. No more". With war all is lost.

What comes to mind is that elderly woman who — looking at the ruins of Hiroshima, with wise but very painful resignation, with that mournful resignation that women are able to experience, because it is their charism — said: "Men do everything possible to declare and wage war, and in

the end they destroy themselves”.

This is war: our own self-destruction. Surely that woman, that elderly woman, had lost children and grandchildren there; all she had left was heartache and tears. And if today is a day of hope, today is also a day of tears. Tears as those felt and wept by women when the mail arrived: “Madame, you have the honour to have had a husband who was a hero for the Homeland; that your sons are heroes for the Homeland”. They are tears that today humanity must not forget. This pride of this humankind that has not learned its lesson and that seems unwilling to learn it!

When so many times in history men think of waging a war, they are convinced they are bringing about a new world; they are convinced they are creating a “springtime”. And it ends in a dreadful, cruel winter, with the reign of terror and death. Today let us pray for all the departed, all of them, but in a special way for these young people, at a moment in which so many die in the daily battles of this piecemeal war. Let us also pray for today’s dead, the victims of war, also children, innocents. This is the result of war: death. May the Lord grant us the grace to weep.