

*IN NOMINE JESU*

## **SUPERCONQUERORS IN JESUS**

Our homily for this Veteran's Day Memorial Service is taken from our inspired readings. Hear the Word of the Lord:

*But, in all these things, we continue to be super conquerors through the One loving us (Romans 8:37).*

**Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**

Since the time after December 13, 1636, veterans of organized military units have been recognized as coming forth from lands that would be called the United States of America.<sup>1</sup> From compulsory service required by colonial laws to the all-Volunteer force of today, across a span of almost 375 years, men and women have answered their governments' calls to bear arms in service to one another, and by extension, their fellow citizens. Whether their obedience was done to honor a draft notice, or out of personal convictions to volunteer for service in the armed forces, individuals became part of a greater whole which has served to help governments on this continent and around the world bear the sword to punish evildoers.

In other words, veterans, in their military roles, are called to serve to keep order in societies, to uphold the First Use of God's Law. Such service is noble and honorable as it is kept within the bounds of the Law of God written on every human's heart. Throughout the past four centuries, various military Codes of Conduct have been taught, written, and re-written. These are taught to give soldiers, sailors, Marines,

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<sup>1</sup> Internet. <http://www.nationalguard.mil/news/archives/2010/12/121310-birthday.aspx> accessed November 9, 2013.

airmen, and coast guard members moral grounding as they are called upon to make decisions – on and off the battlefield. Moral military codes, as well as laws such as the Law of Land Warfare, are formulated based upon teachings such as *you shall not murder; you shall not steal; you shall not covet* and so forth.

For active military members, reserve and National Guard, veterans and our families, such honor-codes can serve as a basis for our relationships with one another, and even with those who fight against us. Yet, when we reach the end of our days, even the most honorable codes of conduct are not enough to sustain us, to remove fear and doubt about our eternal welfare, to encourage us in the last battle. For that, every human, whether he or she admits it or not, needs something greater than noble humans moral codes. They, you and I, need something greater than ourselves to cling to in our last hour.

This is where faith enters in. The need to cling to something, Someone, greater than ourselves in our times of death, is written into the center of what it means to be truly human. For the miserable lot, that something is nationalism, or a loved one, or a fond memory of some “happy place.” For a joyful few, that Someone is the Creator of the Universe who has loved them enough to fight for them.

Some 30 centuries ago, the people of the Lord remembered the sting of death experienced by their forefathers. They expressed their feelings in the words of the ancient song, just as it was written:

*"On account of You we are being put to death the whole day. We were reckoned as slaughtered sheep" (Romans 8:36) (Ps. 44:22; Zech 11:4).*

Reflect on those words which you have just heard again... *on account of You we are being put to death the whole day. We were reckoned as slaughtered sheep...* At the height of their worldly dominion, with the glory of the Promised Land, theirs under the uniting hand of their conquering victorious military leader, King David, the people of YHWH still felt the hostility of their enemies. The unfaithful peoples in their world hated them on account of their special fellowship with YHWH. As a result, they likened themselves to ones who were being put to death for the Faith. Earthly people of the Faith, even while surrounded by God's rich blessings, feel the persecution and narrowness of the unbelievers who surround them.

Thirty centuries after the people of Israel expressed their fears at the evil intents of their unbelieving neighbors, God inspired St. Paul to remind YHWH's faithful few that they too would experience similar thoughts and feelings. Those of us who have lived, and fought, and survived will have times when we believe and feel that we are being persecuted unto death. Even now, many here who have come for this Memorial Service are feeling pressure to conform our beliefs, our confessions of the Faith into molds which cannot create and sustain faith in anyone's last hour.

We are the ones here today (with the exception of the multitudes of the unseen heavenly hosts which surround us) who have lived because others paid the ultimate

earthly price for our freedom to assemble at events such as this. While this Armistice Day (the name the generation that fought the Great War learned to use for the eleventh day of the eleventh month), this Veterans' Day is a time to remember those who have paid the ultimate human price for our many freedoms, including the freedom to worship according to our consciences. It is also a time to honor and remember the service of those who still live and fight the daily battles with the forces of evil. Some of these are due to battlefield memories which will not go away; physical and mental trauma aftereffects of honorable military service; or personal demons that come with having faced death and lived. We are the ones who have survived, who hear the "thank you for your service" from those who have not "been there," and truly cannot understand. We have held our fellow servicemembers, or what was left of them, and comforted them in their last minutes. It is for us here today, in places like this that we need to hear eternal words of encouragement, words which bring hope to us as we continue to fight the battles of this life.

This morning, almost twenty centuries after St. Paul penned his words which hearken back centuries to his forefathers in the faith, YHWH speaks to you. He desires to remind you that you are not alone in struggling with any tragic events from your time of military service, or even the trials which you face this day. Human struggles continue for each of us, as they did for the faithful of all generations. Writing first to

those faithful who would be murdered for their confession of the Faith, under the orders of various human conquerors, St. Paul says,

*But, in all these things, we continue to be super conquerors through the One loving us (Romans 8:37).*

Those who hold onto the right confession of the Faith – that Jesus won the ultimate victory in time and eternity when He died and rose from the dead, that His Name was placed upon them, that He died and rose from the grave for them – are reminded that they were more than victors on some battlefield. Theirs, yours, is a victory that no human military might can achieve. In the God/Man Jesus, the Savior, death itself was conquered. No matter what you may have experienced in the struggles of your life, no matter what may trouble you in the coming weeks, months and years, your ultimate victory is certain as you remain in Christ Jesus. In Him, you are a super conqueror: one whose ultimate victory over sin, death and hell is certain. To you, God says:

*What then will we say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? (Rom. 8:31)*

Those who are united in the fight to Christ, for Christ is one with the Father, then God is for you. No one, not even the great Accuser has the right to bring charges of sin against you. God's forgiveness in Christ Jesus is real, it is eternal, and it has been won for you. What a fitting memorial for this day! Hear again how God has determined to give Jesus' victory to you:

God... *did not spare His own Son, but handed Him over for us all. How then will He not also, by Him, give out of grace all things to us? (Rom. 8:32).*

Because the Father did not spare His only-begotten Son from death without hope, you do not have to experience your last hour alone. Jesus took your sins upon His sinless back, suffered the blows you deserved, and died for you. He who is named Jesus – Salvation – has become your salvation. His Name is yours.

As a super conqueror in the Name of Jesus, you have had been granted His victory. Those things that bound you to death are continually being cast off from you. Rejoice, you super conquerors in Christ, for God's memorial Day has come, and its conquest is yours!

**The peace which passes all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus**

## **National Veterans' Day**

Psalm 80:1-7; Revelation 7:13-17; Romans 8:31-39; Matthew 24:32-35

November 11, 2013

*Paster Michael S. Mercheuse*

***Soli Deo Gloria***

*Further notes:*

*Who will bring a charge against the elect ones of God? God, the continually Righteous One? (Romans 8:33)*

*Who is the one continually condemning? Christ Jesus, the one dying, rather, rising, who also remains on the right (hand) of God, who also continues to intercede for us? (Romans 8:34)*

*In your hearts enthrone him; there let him subdue all that is not holy, all that is not true: crown him as your captain in temptation's hour; let his will enfold you in its light and pow'r (LW #178, stz. 5).*

*Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Tribulation or narrowness; persecution or hunger; nakedness; danger or sword? (Romans 8:35)*

*But, in all these things, we continue to be superconquerors through the One loving us (Romans 8:37).*

*For I remain persuaded that neither death nor life, neither angels nor rulers, neither things present nor things continually coming; nor powers (Romans 8:38).*

*Neither height nor depth, nor any other creature will have power to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:39).*