



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF SAN FRANCISCO
ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΦΡΑΓΚΙΣΚΟΥ

Veteran's Day 2017

Dearly Beloved,

Ninety-nine years ago, the “war to end all wars”, World War I, ended on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month. A few years later, the United States resolved that the 11th of November should be “commemorated with thanksgiving and prayer . . . designed to perpetuate peace through good will and mutual understanding between nations”.

World War I did not end war as the patriots proclaimed a century ago. Another world war – even more destructive than the “Great War” – was soon to follow, and shortly thereafter the war in Korea. So, in 1954 Armistice Day, as it had been known previously, was renamed Veterans Day, so that all American veterans of all wars would be honored. Sadly, war continued to mark the twentieth century and continues into the twenty-first. Honoring our veterans is as important as ever, if only to remind us that we have not found a way for peace to prevail.

Men and women who love America have served in the five branches of the military: Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard. They have served throughout the world on many missions, facing danger and risking their lives. At the end of their service, they often returned home with little fanfare, except to the embrace of their families, which were grateful for their safe return. Yet, many also bore tremendous scars and wounds – physical and emotional. As a member of a team that took care of many veterans who were battling many psychological traumas caused by their experience of the violence and horrors of warfare, I came to a new respect and admiration for those who were willing to take up arms and serve in the military.

On November 11, our nation honors the men and women who served. As the poet Maya Angelou once said, “How important it is for us to recognize and celebrate our heroes!” As a Church we too should honor publicly our brothers and sisters who served in the Armed Forces. In all of our parishes, we will find veterans from World War II, Korea, Vietnam, down to today’s conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, and also those who served elsewhere around the world. Included among our veterans are clergy and military chaplains. We must express our thanks to those who served because they risked all to defend the highest principles of our nation.

As we gratefully remember those who valiantly served our country on this Veteran’s Day, let us pray to our Lord that He may keep them safe and always under His watchful care.

With Love in Christ,

Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco

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