

Homily – Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary & Memorial Day San Fernando Cemetery II – May 31, 2021

Despite – or should I say above and beyond – the nonsense of violence and war, our faith opens up a gap through the shadow of death that allows our shining hope to prevail. It echoes the message of the Cross of our Lord. Faith allows us to believe that there is light coming up from the ground where our loved ones lie. We find meaning as we express our love for those who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country, its people and the cherished principles that keep us together. They eloquently remind us who we are. Through the witness and the memory of our women and men, who made the ultimate sacrifice in the performance of their military duties while serving in our Armed Forces, the Lord reminds us of the fundamental Christian values that we hold as a people and as a country. But furthermore, through them He reminds us and He indicates to us who we should strive to be.

Our heroes unite us in our love of God, as well as our love for them, for one another and for our country, around our faith and our hope in Jesus Christ. We believe in a merciful God who received them as his beloved and faithful children. We are challenged to honor their memory building on their legacy. They dare us to earn their sacrifice! But the answer to the question about who we are, and the strength to become what we are called to be, can only be found in the God to whom we implore mercy for our beloved heroes.

Today the Church also commemorates the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary to her cousin, Elizabeth, who in her old age had

conceived a son, the Precursor of Our Lord, Saint John the Baptist. This mystery perfectly illustrates what Pope Francis has expressed with these words: “We become fully human when we become more than human, when we let God bring us beyond ourselves in order to attain the fullest truth of our being. Here we find the source and inspiration of all our efforts at evangelization. For if we have received the love which restores meaning to our lives, how can we fail to share that love with others?”

A humble young lady was transformed into the Mother of God. She was found worthy precisely because she would not keep that to herself, just like she kept nothing else. She was all gift-of-self to God, so God gave himself to us through her. She had to travel “to the hill country in haste” to serve the first person she could. She was the first evangelizer whose “soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord.” Interestingly, the first bearer of the good news delivered it to the one whose mission was to “go before the Lord to prepare his ways”. Her haste flipped the sequence of time. God’s mercy arrives even before we realize we need it. That is its hallmark and the source of our trust in our Heavenly Father, in whose hands we commend these beloved sisters and brothers who have walked before us and whom we honor today.

Blessed Mother of Guadalupe, teach us to be diligent and affectionate to serve others “in haste” in the name of Jesus.