Strage Inutile ("useless slaughter")

On the Eleventh Hour of the Eleventh Day of the Eleventh Month, 1918, the guns fell silent and the fighting of the Great War ceased.

These are the principal foundations on which we believe the future order of peoples must be based. They are such as to make the repetition of similar conflicts impossible and pave the way for the solution of the economic question, so important for the future and for the material well-being of all the belligerent states. In presenting them to you, who in this tragic hour govern the fate of the belligerent peoples, we are inspired by the dear and sweet hope of seeing them accepted and thus of quickly bringing an end to this terrible struggle, which every day appears more and more like a useless slaughter.

Reflect on your most grave responsibility before God and before men; The peace and joy of countless families, the lives of thousands of young people, and the very happiness of the people, which you have the absolute duty to secure, depend on your resolutions. May the Lord inspire you to make decisions in accordance with His most holy will, and grant that, while earning the applause of the present age, you will also secure for future generations the reputation of peacemakers.

Meanwhile, fervently uniting ourselves in prayer and penance with all the faithful souls who long for peace, we implore from the Divine Spirit light and counsel.

APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION

FROM THE DEBUT

From the Vatican, August 1, 1917.

Benedictus PP. XV

Reflection

We have reduced Veterans Day to a cliché. And sometimes an insincere refrain of "***Thank you for your service***" has become a throwaway line in the endless drone of sayings and catch phrases (detached from the desire for peace). President Woodrow Wilson first proclaimed Armistice Day on November 11, 1919 to remember the soldiers and sailors who served, later expanded and renamed to recall all the wars since. Remember: ***<u>We are citizens first, soldiers second.</u>***

President Woodrow Wilson (1919), "***and because of the opportunity it has given America to show her sympathy with peace and justice in the councils of nations."***

Therein lies the forgotten, the millions of victims of ambition, nationalism, fear, vengeance, and the failures of leaders. Yet even the peace that followed the armistice contained seeds that helped bring forth the terror of World War II. In the same habit, we have returned to the war-making ways. How is it we do not see the same drama playing out in our current age?

We must raise our sight to the heavens. Our horizon must be beyond today, beyond soldiering and into the citizenship of peace.

He shall judge between the nations, and set terms for many peoples. They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; One nation shall not raise the sword against another, nor shall they train for war again (Isa 2:4).