

Dear Parishioners:

As you know, we celebrate **Veterans Day** on November 11. Veterans Day dates back to the end of World War I, the “war to end all wars”. World War I ended officially at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month in 1918. It was originally known as “Armistice Day” since the war officially ended with the signing of the treaty or armistice. The actual signing of the treaty took place 7 months later, on June 28, 1919 in Versailles, France.

In 1938, a Congressional Act made November 11th a legal holiday: “a day to be dedicated to the cause of world peace and to thereafter to be celebrated and known as Armistice Day”. In 1954 the name was changed to Veterans Day. In 1971, in accord with the “*Uniform Monday Holiday Act*”, Veterans Day was moved to the fourth Monday in October. However, in 1978, Veterans Day was moved back to its original celebration on November 11.

In many churches, on Sunday, November 11, Veterans Day, our veterans are often asked to stand and to be acknowledged for their service to God and country. I am always very touched by the warm reception our veterans receive from our people. It is good to know that our veterans are appreciated here in our churches, synagogues and mosques. While I realize that far too many people see Veterans Day as a shopping day with special sales, I am very happy to see we do not do that at our places of worship.

This past Wednesday, Bishop Robert Coyle administered the **Sacrament of Confirmation** to 187 9th graders. When I was a boy, when we were confirmed, we were told that now you were a “soldier in Christ’s army”. You had an obligation to defend the church from all evil. As part of the ceremony, the Bishop would hit you on your cheek as a sign that you would have to endure hardships for Christ. Also, the Bishop would ask catechism questions of the candidates. This was to emphasize that if you are to defend Christ and His Church, you need to know something about Christ and His Church!

Now we use the image of an “adult witness”. As a “witness”, you need to know things about “the case”, namely Christ and His Church. In addition, you need to testify on behalf of Christ. Being a confirmed Catholic means that you are not to remain silent about Christ and His Church; rather, you are to tell others about Christ.

Remember: Together, we can do something beautiful for God.

In Christ,

Fr. Brian

PS: Some Veteran Fun Facts:

- + 20.4 million living veterans in the U.S., representing less than 10% of the population
 - 771,000 World War II Veterans
 - 1,600,000 Korean-War Veterans
 - 6,800,000 Vietnam War Veterans
 - 7,100,000 Gulf War era Veterans (August 1990 – present)
 - 4,129,000 Veterans who served in peacetime (largely 1974 – 1990)
- + 7% of U.S. adults who are veterans (down from 18% in 1980)
- + 9% of veterans who are women, projected to increase to 18% by 2045