



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI
TO EX-SERVICEMEN FROM THE LAST WORLD WAR
FROM SOUTH AFRICA***

Thursday, 11 June 1970

Dear Friends from South Africa,

You have come back to Italy which has so many memories for you. And on this occasion you who are ex-servicemen from the last world war - now accompanied by your dear families-have asked to pay Us a visit. We are most happy to receive you, happy to welcome you all and extend to you the hospitality of this audience, We hope that you also are happy to be here.

Your presence among us inspires us to make just two simple observations. The first one is to tell you of Our deep affection for you and for your families and for all those who dwell within the vast boundaries of your nation. We pray for you often and are pleased to be able to tell you so in person this morning.

But because your visit is of necessity marked by the traces of the past, marked indeed by the memories of a war, We feel compelled also to manifest Our deeply felt sentiments in this regard. Our immediate thought is for your beloved dead, those whom you have come to honour by your visit. We join you in prayerful and affectionate commemoration of them as they lie interred in the soil of a nation other than their own, in the hope of resurrection.

At the same time Our meditation is concentrated on the malice of war and on the great blessing which is peace. Like yourselves We know the disastrous reality which is war. Still We have an undying hope for tomorrow. Christianity has a dimension beyond the present and because of this We too share the vision of Isaiah as We look forward to that day peoples "will hammer their swords into ploughshares, their spears into sickles. Nation will not lift sword against nation, there will be no more training for war" (Is. 2: 4).

At the same time We know that this peace is brought about only through justice. The motto of Our Venerable Predecessor, Pope Pius XII, is still valid: *Opus iustitiae pax*. Peace is indeed the work of justice.

We hope that you, dear friends, will make your personal contribution to the reign of justice in your country and in the world. Through this you will hasten the day of that blessed vision, the day of peace. We hope that this may be your commitment today and always. In the words of another prophet We would remind you: "This is what the Lord asks of you: only this, to act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with your God" (*Mic. 6: 8*).

With affection We invoke upon you all choicest blessing from God.