

Column052420

**Companions on the Journey**

May 24, 2020

Dear Friends in Christ

I received an email at the end of last week and want to share some of it with you. It was from the Catholic Foundation of Greater Philadelphia which has been entrusted with the oversight of the Catholic Charities Appeal. Back at the beginning of the year Saint Anthony's had been assigned a goal for Catholic Charities Campaign. That goal was a tad over \$59,000. Now, my friends, that is a lot of money. Almost \$60,000. So the email that I received said the following:

Congratulations, Msgr. McHenry, to you and the Saint Anthony community on exceeding your Catholic Charities Appeal (CCA) Parish Goal of \$59,172 by raising \$64,619 to date!

I had no idea but I confess, I am not surprised. You are so generous to the Lord and his work. You are so supportive with your resources. You are so mindful and attentive and helpful to those in need whom you will never know, never meet, and never receive any thanks from. It doesn't seem to matter to you. You give and you give some more. And then you give again. Well, I just want you to know how grateful I am and I believe Our Lord is grateful too. On his behalf and on behalf of the countless human beings whose lives you support and whose burden you relieve I thank you for the good and generous efforts you make.

This weekend is Memorial Day Weekend. It will be a different Memorial Day from any other we have ever celebrated. There is so much that has changed in two months. But one thing has not changed. We are a grateful nation to those men and women who have served our country and defended our country even to the point of risking their lives or even laying down their lives. Every family has someone. I had a cousin my age who died in Viet Nam in 1968. He was 21. A marine. It was what he wanted to do with his life, serve his country. His father did and his uncles did and his brother did. He, though, paid the ultimate price.

Do you remember 1968 when Martin Luther King Jr and Robert F. Kennedy were both assassinated? That was the summer my cousin gave his life. I was his age. I have been given 52 more years than he was given. He never had the opportunity to fall in love and get married and have a family and bounce his grandchildren on his knee. No. All of that was snuffed out in an instant. One bullet.

My friends, as we salute and honor the fallen of our country, let us also dig down a little deeper to pray—to pray for the day when those who serve our country will not be asked to pay for the privilege with their lives. Let us pray for an end to armed combat and an end to war of all kinds. There has to be a better way. and we who believe in Jesus must help to find that better way. It cannot become acceptable that we simply send our best young women and men into harm's way without a second thought to the very real cost. This pandemic has at least brought us to this point. There really is a cost to things—all things. Let us value the gift of life and the dedicated service of a life as the highest good.

Peace, Msgr. McHenry