

LEST WE FORGET...

This Monday we celebrate Memorial Day. It is a time of celebrating unofficially the beginning of the summer, even though weather wise, it might not feel that way! The beaches and pools will be open and many of us will attend barbecues and parties to commemorate a special day. But of course, Memorial Day is more than just a day of eating, drinking and partying. It is a day solemn remembrance. On this day, we call to mind all those men and women in the Armed Forces who made the supreme sacrifice for the United States of America in all its wars. We should say a quiet prayer of thanksgiving for the heroism, the bravery, the devotion and the courage of so many of our fellow citizens who answered the call to duty whenever freedom was threatened whether here at home or around the globe. Every Memorial Day, I run the four mile race held on the boardwalk. It is a race that attracts hundreds of people whether runners or walkers. This year I will run in memory of my father, Louis Jerome, Sr. who served in the United States Navy during the Second World War. When I feel tired or hot during the race, I will think of my father and so many others who made great sacrifices so that we could all enjoy freedom today. Hopefully, that thought will get me over the finish line! Somebody once said, "Freedom is not free." How true those words are. Indeed, freedom is not free-it comes at quite a cost. Recently, I was reading about a very great American-General Dwight David Eisenhower. Later on he became our 34th President in the 1950's. It was General Eisenhower who was chosen to lead the allied invasion on "D-Day" June 6, 1944 at Omaha Beach. Known as "Operation Overlord," this invasion commanded by the General helped to stem the tide of the war in Europe and to defeat the Nazi's. "D-Day" truly was a horrific and bloody day. Twenty years after the invasion, Eisenhower visited the scene of the battle again and he said this, "You see people out there swimming and sailing and enjoying the beautiful beach. It's almost unreal to remember what it was... to think of the lives that were given for principle, paying a terrible price on this beach alone, on that day-one day-2000 casualties! But they did it so that the world could be free. It just shows what free men will do rather than be slaves." On this Memorial Day, we should reflect upon the words of a great American. How quickly we forget and how little we appreciate the sacrifices of those who served our country. Every year, I try to attend the Memorial Day Parade here on Staten Island. Often enough, it is very poorly attended. Yet the veterans from all the recent wars show up and either march or ride down Forest Ave. Everybody cheers them on and yells out, "Thank you!" As we enjoy our holiday this Monday, let us all be thankful for a land that's free and remember the price that was paid so we could enjoy it!

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Jerome