



May 25, 2008 and November 9, 2008

## With Gratitude and Honor

*Prayers for Memorial Day and Veterans' Day Sundays*

### Memorial Day, 2008

Gracious God, on this Memorial Day weekend,  
we remember and give thanks  
for those who have given their lives  
in the service of our country.

When the need was greatest,  
they stepped forward and did their duty  
to defend the freedoms that we enjoy,  
and to win the same for others.

O God, you yourself have taught us  
that no love is greater than that  
which gives itself for another.

These honored dead gave the most precious gift they had,  
life itself,  
for loved ones and neighbors,  
for comrades and country – and for us.

Help us to honor their memory  
by caring for the family members  
they have left behind,  
by ensuring that their wounded comrades  
are properly cared for,  
by being watchful caretakers of the freedoms  
for which they gave their lives,  
and by demanding that no other young men and women  
follow them to a soldier's grave  
unless the reason is worthy and the cause is just.

Holy One, help us to remember that freedom is not free.  
There are times when its cost is, indeed, dear.  
Never let us forget those who paid so terrible a price  
to ensure that freedom would be our legacy.

Though their names may fade with the passing of generations,  
may we never forget what they have done.  
Help us to be worthy of their sacrifice,

O God, help us to be worthy. Amen.

## Veterans' Day, 2008

O God, we give you thanks today for our nation's veterans.  
We honor them for their faithful service to our country,  
and for what they have done  
to defend and preserve our freedom.  
Generation after generation,  
young men and women  
have answered our country's call,  
and their lives have been changed forever.

We are grateful to all who have served,  
whether in peacetime or in conflict.  
But today we especially remember  
those who have been tempered by fire,  
those who continue to bear wounds  
of the body or the spirit  
as a result of what they endured.  
They lie in our veterans' hospitals  
or struggle for recovery in rehabilitation centers;  
they suffer from post-traumatic stress  
and survivor's guilt;  
they yearn for peace in their souls.

Dear God, we ask you to heal their wounds,  
to banish whatever inner demons may haunt them,  
and to give them peace within  
so they may return fully to their families and to society.

We thank you, God, for all of our country's veterans  
—those of past generations,  
and those who continue to earn this title today.  
May we never forget what our country has asked of them  
and what they have given in return.  
Help us to give them the respect and honor they are due.  
And strengthen our resolve  
to build a world modeled on your realm,  
where war will be pursued no more.

This we ask in the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace. Amen.

**With Gratitude and Honor: Prayers for Memorial Day and Veterans' Day, 2008**, was written by the Rev. John Gundlach, Minister for Government Chaplaincies, Parish Life and Leadership, UCC.



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