

Baltimore Memorial Day Mass a time to remember, honor dead

By Karen Osborne

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More than 50 people gathered for Mass on a hillside at the New Cathedral Cemetery in West Baltimore on a bright, sunny Memorial Day morning May 25 to remember and celebrate lives lost to war and violence, as well as other personal losses.

Linda Rhinehart, a parishioner of St. Philip Neri in Linthicum, came to honor an uncle, George Holmes, who died of gas inhalation in World War I, as well as her grandmother and grandfather, Anne and Stephen Holmes, who are buried in the cemetery.

“We’re here to remember the souls who fought in all of the wars, those who defended our country,” she said. “I have family buried here, so I thought it was perfect.”

As birds sang and police sirens sounded in the background, Archbishop William E. Lori asked Massgoers to think about the purpose of Memorial Day as a moment to “remember our honored dead, those who paid the ultimate sacrifice,” as well as a time to pray for “an end to war and an end to violence” of all kinds, he said.

Along with the traditional definition of a Memorial Day as a time to honor and remember servicemen and women who have died in defense of the United States, Archbishop Lori encouraged local Catholics to use Memorial Day to remember those who have died violently on the streets of Baltimore without anyone to remember or pray for them.

“Let it be ourselves, this group, in this cemetery, at this Mass,” he said.

The number of violent deaths “is mounting, and it is of gravest concern to all of us,” he added.

In the homily, Archbishop Lori said he hoped Baltimore can “pull together as a community” to fix conditions that spark violence and inequality, such as poverty and drug abuse. He also prayed for members of local law enforcement, for deceased family members and friends of those present, and for priests and religious buried in the cemetery.

“There is no better way to remember our beloved dead than in a Mass,” Archbishop Lori said. “Death is not the last word in our lives.”

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