**Veterans Day Ceremony Honors Service and Sacrifice at**

**Calvary Cemetery, Immaculate Conception Church,**

 **Queen of Peace Mausoleum, November 11, 2024**

On a crisp autumn morning, the Queen of Peace Mausoleum at Calvary Cemetery became a place of solemn reflection and gratitude as a heartfelt Veterans Day ceremony brought the community together. Sponsored by the Knights of Columbus Council 277 and led by presiding officer Retired Navy Captain Dan Weed, the event honored the service and sacrifice of veterans across generations.

With flags gently waving in the cool breeze and the sound of patriotic hymns echoing through the mausoleum, the ceremony began at 10 a.m. as attendees gathered to pay their respects. Veterans, families, and community members stood shoulder to shoulder, united by a shared commitment to remembering those who served in the armed forces.

Captain Dan Weed, a retired Navy officer with 30 years of service, opened the ceremony with an address that wove together history and personal reflection. He traced the origins of Veterans Day back to the end of World War I, then known as Armistice Day.

“On the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month in 1918, the guns fell silent,” Captain Weed began. “What started as a day to honor the heroes of World War I has grown to encompass the veterans of every conflict since—the Korean War, Vietnam War, the Gulf War, and those serving today in places like Iraq and Afghanistan.”

Captain Weed emphasized how Veterans Day evolved to recognize not just those who served in uniform but the families and communities who supported them. His words highlighted the enduring legacy of service that binds all veterans, regardless of the era or conflict in which they served.

One of the most poignant moments of the ceremony came as Captain Weed described the history and symbolism of laying wreaths on the graves of fallen veterans. He explained that this custom, dating back to the Civil War, represents both mourning and honor.

“Wreaths are a circle, a symbol of eternity,” Captain Weed explained. “When we lay them on the gravesites of our departed comrades, we reaffirm our commitment to remember their sacrifices and keep their memories alive.”

As part of the ceremony, members of Knights of Columbus Council 277 placed wreaths at several gravesites near the mausoleum, representing veterans from different wars.

Another powerful moment in the ceremony was the tolling of a ship’s bell—a tradition steeped in naval history. Captain Weed introduced this segment by explaining its significance to those who served at sea.

“The ship’s bell was used to mark time, signal the changing of the watch, and sound alarms,” he said. “Today, we use it to honor those who stood the watch during their time in service, whether in the Navy, the Army, the Marines, the Air Force, or the Coast Guard.” The resonant sound echoed through the Mausoleum; a solemn reminder of the sacrifices made by those who answered the call to serve.

For many attendees, the event was an opportunity to reflect on their own connections to military service. Veterans from all branches of the armed forces stood as their respective service songs were played, receiving applause from the gathered crowd.

Captain Weed concluded the ceremony with a call to action, urging attendees to take the spirit of Veterans Day beyond November 11.

“Honoring veterans is not just about ceremonies,” he said. “It’s about how we treat them in our daily lives—ensuring they have the resources they need, listening to their stories, and teaching the next generation about the values they defended.”

The ceremony ended with a moment of silence and a question-and-answer period to help non-veteran attendees understand the importance of this sacred day. Attendees lingered afterward to share memories and thank veterans who had given so much for their country.

The Veterans Day ceremony at the Queen of Peace Mausoleum was a powerful reminder of the sacrifices made by those who wore the uniform and the importance of remembering their contributions to the nation’s freedom.

The Knights of Columbus Council 277, through their sponsorship, and Captain Dan Weed, with his eloquent leadership, ensured that the day was not only a tribute to the past but an inspiration for the future. As Captain Weed aptly stated, “Our nation is built on the service and sacrifice of those who came before us. Let us never forget them.”