

## Memorial Day 2021 Reflection

Fr. Bob Rossi, osc

On this Memorial Day 2021, the Crosiers pay tribute to all military personnel who gave their lives in war to defend the United States and its ideals. We feel especially close to them because, like Jesus, they were friend enough to lay down their lives for those they loved. All those who made the ultimate sacrifice knew that they were putting themselves in harm's way for the cause of human freedom and dignity. They took up that Cross with a great sense of purpose. America today lives freer because they died.

The Crosiers are proud that among the number of these brave patriots is one of our own, Fr. Jan Van Kilsdonk, osc. He was a Dutch Crosier who arrived in the United States in 1936 to join other Dutch and Belgian Crosiers in the Crosier mission here to touch suffering with hope. Fr. Van Kilsdonk served as a chaplain in the armed forces during the Second World War. He died at age 47 of wounds suffered from a mine explosion as the American troops were withdrawing from Aachen, Germany. He was brought back to the United States with hope of recovery, but subsequently died in 1945 in Spokane, Washington. *Lang zal je leven in de gloria, confrère Van Kilsdonk!* With pride, we, your brothers, celebrate your memory today.

We invite all of our Companions, families, friends and benefactors to join us on this Memorial Day to honor the brave men and women of the American military who died for us. May they rest in peace. May we never fail in gratitude to them. May we stand ready to imitate their life-giving generosity in service of our fellow citizens. And may our CrossWalk ministry to veterans in Phoenix always serve as part of our tribute to them.