

## Homily on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Respective delegates from Military Associations at Your Annual Conference on Apostolate in Military Service!

Today is September 11<sup>th</sup>. Who would not reconsider the fatal day twelve years ago? It was almost a midday when terrorist organisation Al Kaida attacked two buildings, a symbol of economic power, wealth and capital itself. In ruins, thousands of innocent victims found their end, together with hundreds of them, who tried to help the casualties. A prominent part of American Big Apple, New York, became a desert in a flash of the moment.

Today's Word of God brings another desert in our consideration – the spiritual desert.

The Lord's attitude towards people is most accurately spoken by the language of love: „I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you. Again I will build you, and you shall be built, O virgin Israel!“ (Jeremiah 31:3-4)

Love of God towards Israel is „everlasting“, eternal. It remains, regardless to all. It origins in the exil of land of Egypt, where God enforced his covenant between himself and his people, after he saved them from slavery. Therefore, the desert itself witnessed love in which God, the groom, cares for his bride. It is there, where Israel learned to love the Lord and the Lord sealed the covenant of faithfulness with his people. The covenant he laid on „everlasting love“ (cf Jer 31:3). Likewise, the Prophet Hosea also uses the parallel of matrimonial love when describing God as the One who tends to reconstruct the original love in Israel and picks the place where it origins: „Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her“ (Hosea 2:14). The wilderness, a desert so to speak, is not an invented fictional place, but rather a place where love grows out of stability and devotion, a place where believers consciently discover the power of love and an urge of fidelity to the Lord and his holy Covenant. The desert we find as a path of hope, a path leading to „rest“ (cf Jeremiah 31:2). Furthermore, where we find a desert today, if not in our cities, where unfortunately the life and love, like in a desert, we seek in vain so oftenly? In very this contemporary desert the believers are called to re-discover and make alive the covenant with God. In here, in hearts of our cities, there is a place of love, a place of longing for new city, a place of happiness and peace for all. The path from the desert to Jerusalem is not some other space, is not a path foreign to our perceptions. This path runs through the centre of the city, in the midst of human existence. We are called to moderate our cities from the deserts of violence and loneliness to places of love

and peace. Our cities will thus begin to get a form of Jerusalem, „the place of rest“, where the Lord dwells; like a holy mountain, which spreads its ray of light around the earth. Our path leads on high; it excludes all egocentrism's for they are heavy and pull down. The Prophet foresaw a path out from the city-desert into city-peace, where there are no plagues anymore but rather a wealth with dance of joy connecting all generations. That was a prophecy onto all believers who gathered in front of the Lord and are engulfed into his providential plan of love. It included the poor and the sick, the blind and the lame (Cf Jeremiah 31:8), women and children, all who are touched by the Gospel of friendship and celebration. No one is forgotten. Thus says the Lord: „For I am a father to Israel and E'phraim is my first-born“ (Jeremiah 31:9).

Beloved! You serve with the purpose to change the deserts of disturbance to cities of peace, just and understanding. I do monitor activities of our Military Chaplains and Pastoral Assistants very closely and evidently they are well appreciated by good-willing people either at home or on peace keeping operations where their mission is to live with and support the locals and all in service. May God on the intercession of Holy Mary, Queen of Peace, bless in plenitude your efforts on your noble mission!

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