

A Salute from Durante

There's a wonderful story about Jimmy Durante, one of the greatest entertainers of a generation or two ago. It is told by Tim Hansel in *Holy Sweat* by Word Books.

Durante was asked to be a part of a show for World War II veterans. He told the inquirer that his schedule was very busy, and he could afford only a few minutes. But if the show's producers wouldn't mind his doing one short monologue and immediately leaving for his next appointment, he would come. Of course, the show's director agreed happily.

But when Durante got on stage, something interesting happened. He went through the short monologue and then stayed. The applause grew louder and louder, and he kept staying. Pretty soon, he had been on for 15, 20, then 30 minutes. Finally, he took a last bow and left the stage.

Backstage, someone stopped him and said, "I thought you had to go after a few minutes. What happened?"

Durante answered: "I did have to go, but I can show you the reason I stayed. You can see for yourself if you'll look in the front row."

In the front row were two men, each of whom had lost an arm in the war. One had lost his right arm and the other had lost his left. Together, they were able to clap, and that's exactly what they were doing, loudly and cheerfully.



Durante recognized their sacrifices for their country, and he was paying them back in the best way he knew how.

Sunday is Veterans Day 2018. Let us take opportunities to thank veterans, both active and retired from military service, whether they be residents in our buildings, fellow church members or visitors. And make it a point to express appreciation to family members of veterans who are serving, or of those who are no longer with us. Families, you see, also sacrifice for the sake of the freedoms we enjoy.

We pay them back by the service, the encouragement and the appreciation we extend. In return, their "applause" may be forthcoming in different ways, but it is there.

– Beecher Hunter