

The Flame of the Arc.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the reviving of the Flame of the Arc de Triomphe is now about to start. This unchangeable act, whose grandeur lies in both its simplicity and its symbolic, is worth an explanation so our individual and collective presence enshrines itself in a long tradition and sticks to its original meaning.

The grave we are all facing is both the tomb of an unknown soldier and the cenotaph of all his comrades in arms, killed in action for France. It has been designed to remember the immense sacrifices French Army consented during WWI to defend our country. The 1,400,000 or so soldiers killed in action had been the price to pay to defend each acre of our land and prevail. One must add to these massive losses those of WWII, of Indochina, of Algeria and of more recent conflicts. Thanks to them and their sacrifices we now enjoy living in a free country. And, in order to preserve the souvenir of this unknown but famous soldier, honored by his sacrifice and his grandeur, a flame was added three years later to the monument, known as the "Flamme du Souvenir".

But memory alone, though indispensable, is not enough; we must understand the meaning of all these sacrifices unimaginable to us. Because at the time the consequences of these battles had been and still are supported by the whole of the French nation. Here we think destructions, wounded, widows and orphans that suffered and still suffer of their hearts, their bodies and their souls! So as we understand that no suffering is ever vain when the final goal is shared and supported by all, this flame went from being the "Flame of the Comradeship" to the "Flame of the Nation"!

Life teaches us that nothing is acquired forever and that to live freely in a country in peace is not a given. Each of us must remember that by honoring this Unknown Soldier, he pays a tribute to all who in the past years served France, who built and defended our nation, who made the ultimate sacrifice and who are today our examples and references. That is why all of us, by coming here tonight, commits himself or herself to the service of one's nation in any form it may take. This is the price of the future of our country ! This is the "Flame of Hope" !

Tonight, will take part to the reviving ceremony the following organisations : ...