

A Service for Remembrance Sunday



I lift up my eyes to the hills – from whence will my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. *Psalm 121:1,2*

We come together in the name of Christ and share his peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

Lord God our Father, maker of all: we praise you for your great work creating the world.
Give us the skill to build a society where all may thrive, and forgive us when we use your gifts poorly.
Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy**

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, Prince of Peace: as we thank you for your life among us, forgive us when we fail to live together as one family. Help us to dwell together in love and peace, seeking one another's welfare, bearing one another's burdens, and sharing one another's joys. Christ have mercy. **Christ have mercy**

Holy Spirit, Lord of grace, fulfiller of humanity: give us strength to face the future, and wisdom to learn from the past as we remember those who have given their lives in the service of justice and peace.
Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy**

Let us remember before God, and commend to his sure keeping: those who have died for their country in conflict; those whom we knew, and whose memory we treasure; and all who have lived and died in the service of humanity. They shall grow not old as we that are left grow old: age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them.
We will remember them.

The last post

The Silence

The Reveile

Ever-living God, we remember those whom you have gathered from the storm of war into the peace of your presence; may that same peace calm our fears, bring justice to all peoples and establish harmony among the nations, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

**O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home:**

**Under the shadow of thy throne,
Thy saints have dwelt secure;
Sufficient is thine arm alone,
And our defense is sure.**

**Before the hills in order stood,
Or earth received her frame,
From everlasting thou art God,
To endless years the same.**

**A thousand ages in thy sight
Are like an evening gone;
Short as the watch that ends the night
Before the rising sun.**

**Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
Bears all its sons away;
They fly, forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the opening day.**

**O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Be thou our guide while troubles last,
And our eternal home!**

Gospel reading – Mark 13:1-8

As he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, 'Look, Teacher, what large stones and what large buildings!' Then Jesus asked him, 'Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.'

When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately, 'Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign that all these things are about to be accomplished?' Then Jesus began to say to them, 'Beware that no one leads you astray. Many will come in my name and say, "I am he!" and they will lead many astray. When you hear of wars and rumours of wars, do not be alarmed; this must take place, but the end is still to come. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birth pangs.'

Reflection

What a reading from Mark's gospel. The people listening to Jesus were no doubt looking for something that would offer them hope. And he gave them a litany of disasters that would befall the world, beginning with the destruction of the temple that they all held so dear and of which they were so proud. And then after warning them that there would be people trying to lead them astray he went on to list other frightening things that they would encounter; earthquakes, and famines, nation rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.

And today, we remember men and women who in the past, not only showed remarkable endurance, but gave their lives to ensure our freedom.

A few years ago, we visited St Laurent in northern France where there is a large American Military Cemetery overlooking Omaha Beach. Entry to the cemetery was through the visitors' centre where full security precautions were in place. Pockets emptied and bags x-rayed, we passed through the metal detector; closely watched by five or more security guards. What lay on the other side was truly humbling. We made our way through a hall that gave a time line of the D-day landings with pictures, films, artefacts and written accounts. We passed through the statistics into the personal. We were introduced to some of those "statistics". It was all becoming much more real and connected much more to my own being. I saw the pictures, and heard the stories of some of those whose response to the threat of evil had been unselfish and sacrificial. They were all Americans, yet their example, the sacrifice that they made was no different from that of all those who we remember today.

We walked down to the beach, now accessed by a winding path, and with little evidence of the horrors of all those involved in the D-Day landings. Yet just to stand there looking along the coast and out to sea, there was a presence, a sense of peace; respected by all those who had come down the path chattering and laughing. It was powerful stuff.

And then the cemetery. The graves are arranged in blocks, and in such a way that wherever you stand you can see the full face of a white stone cross marking the final resting place of one of the fallen. And there is row upon row of these grave markers. In fact, 9387 to be precise. High ranking officers alongside private soldiers. All are equal in death. Each one having paid the ultimate price for our freedom. Looking on all those headstones, and imagining that instead that the people themselves were standing there really brought home to me, what a huge sacrifice was made. In addition, there is a wall on which the names of some 1500 men, missing in action, and whose final resting place is unknown.

It could be a depressing place, particularly as it still evokes such great emotion and sadness in many of the visitors with personal memories of those buried there. Yet the overall impression is one of calm and peace; and, yes, of hope. As you walk towards the exit your eye is immediately drawn to a huge sculpture which represents the spirit of American youth rising from the waves.

And it is this feeling of hope that, for me, gives sense to the sacrifices made by past and current generations. I have never suffered the horrors of war either as a civilian or in the armed forces, and I am thankful for that. Yet the testimony of those who have; those who lost friends, comrades and loved ones, and who bear the scars even after seventy or more years; of those who have been left disabled physically or mentally by war, and of those who care for them demands that I too remember. And like a stone dropped into the middle of a pond the ripples of remembrance spread out in all directions. We need to look back to remember those who have sacrificed so much, and we honour their memory by looking forward in hope determined to build peace and reconciliation in the world.

There are still wars and insurrections, we are also in an age where nation rises against nation, when there are earthquakes, and famines. And we can either turn away, and say that there is nothing we can do; or we can work and pray for peace, even if we don't see immediate results from our efforts. We do these things in faith and hope, and we do them for those who will come after us. Just as so many have for us.

In the words of the Kohima epitaph:

'When you go home, tell them of us and say, for your tomorrow we gave our today.'

In the power of the Spirit, and in union with Christ, let us pray to the Father.

Send forth your strength, O God, **establish what you have wrought in us.**

Uphold all those who fall **and raise up those who are bowed down.**

Open the eyes of the blind **and set the prisoners free.**

Sustain the orphan and the widow **and give food to those who hunger.**

Grant them the joy of your help again **and sustain them with your Spirit.**

O Lord, judge the peoples **and take all nations for your own.**

O God of truth and justice, we hold before you those whose memory we cherish, and those whose names we will never know. Help us to lift our eyes above the torment of this broken world, and grant us the grace to pray for those who wish us harm. As we honour the past, may we put our faith in your future; for you are the source of life and hope, now and for ever. **Amen**

We gather our prayers together in the prayer that Jesus gave us.

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

**All my hope on God is founded,
all my trust he shall renew;
me through change and chance he guideth,
only good and only true:
God unknown, he alone
calls my heart to be his own.**

**Daily doth the almighty giver
bounteous gifts on us bestow;
his desire our soul delighteth,
pleasure leads us where we go.
Love doth stand at his hand;
Joy doth wait on his command.**

**Human pride and earthly glory,
sword and crown betray his trust;
what with care and toil he buildeth,
tower and temple, fall to dust.
But God's power, hour by hour,
is my temple and my tower.**

**Still from man to God eternal
sacrifice of praise be done;
high above all praises praising
for the gift of Christ his Son:
Christ doth call, one and all –
we who follow shall not fall.**

**God's great goodness ay endureth,
deep his wisdom, passing thought:
splendour, light, and life attend him,
beauty springeth out of nought.**

**Evermore, from his store
new-born worlds rise and adore.**

Lord God, our Father, we pledge ourselves to serve you and all your peoples, in the cause of peace, for the relief of want and suffering, and for the praise of your name. Guide us by your Spirit; give us wisdom; give us courage; give us hope; and keep us faithful now and always.

The National Anthem

**God save our gracious Queen,
Long live our noble Queen,
God save the Queen!
Send her victorious,**

**Happy and glorious,
Long to reign over us,
God save the Queen!**

Go forth into the world in peace; be of good courage; hold fast to that which is good; render no one evil for evil; strengthen the faint-hearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honour everyone; love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you, and those whom you love and pray for this day and for ever more. **Amen.**