

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Almighty God, you call us into a common friendship Of solidarity and love;
draw near to us as we commemorate those who have died in war.
As we reflect on their sacrifice and the horrors of conflict,
may you move us to always work for peace and justice in our broken world.
We ask this through the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Penitence Let us come to the Lord, who is full of compassion,
and acknowledge our transgressions in penitence and faith.

Lord God, you sent your Son to reconcile us to yourself and to one another.

Lord, Have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you heal the wounds of sin and division.

Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

Holy Spirit, through you we put to death the sins of the body – and live.

Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

Absolution: May God our Father forgive us our sins and bring us to the eternal joy
of his kingdom, where dust and ashes have no dominion. **Amen.**

Isaiah 11:1-9 [The Peaceful Kingdom]

A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear;
but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.
Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.

The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's

den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain;
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 93

John 15:9-17

Jesus said to his disciples: as the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my
commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his
love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to
lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you
servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you
friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose
me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you
whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

This is the gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

Sermon

This Day of Remembrance is hallowed in the family histories of many people; it is a remembrance of two long-drawn-out European and world wars and the effect it had on families, on society and on nations. In our Christian tradition, founded on love, togetherness and forgiveness, it's a very difficult time for many people, because it confronts us with the incompatibility of war and our Christian belief, no matter how we may try to dignify those terrible wars of the 20th century.

One thing that I find difficult is the oft-quoted sentence of today's Gospel "No-one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends" We sometimes forget that these are Jesus' words, as he prepared to depart this life. To me it is too easily mis-interpreted. The idea of sacrificing our best young men in the hope of a peaceful future is rather horrifying. It seems almost pagan, no matter how we dress it up, because to me it is not a call to self-sacrifice. I certainly don't believe that Jesus' words are a general commandment to us all. Quite the contrary. The whole of John's passage attempts to justify not his death – his sacrifice – but his destiny to confront the powerful.

The reading is to me a soliloquy about Jesus' command to love. And, we are told, Jesus loves us without limit, laying down his life for the disciples. Jesus' love has established a new relationship with his disciples – and with us. But I don't think that that relationship was ever meant to be one of blindly persuading men into self-sacrifice. It wasn't meant to be one of fighting, death and hatred.

No: today's readings are pointing in quite the opposite direction. From Isaiah we heard a soliloquy about the peaceful kingdom [the wolf shall live with the lamb; the cow and the bear shall graze] A truly remarkable and unlikely reversal of normal behaviour; it is all about hope and peace. And John quotes Jesus not as suggesting, but commanding us, to love one another. None of the readings is in favour of war. To a new Christian listening to this gospel of John at the end of the first century, what would immediately strike home would be what their baptism implied, and the task set before the baptized: baptism was not merely a church rite, something to be done for little John or Jane, to which friends might be invited. Far from it. Those Christians were offering – were actually giving their lives for God. In times of relative tranquillity they probably just lost their jobs, their reputations, maybe even their families, by becoming Christians. During turbulent times they faced arrest and execution.

Today's gospel is saying that if we accept the grace of membership – of baptism – of being made disciples, followers of God – well then, those rights and that grace give us responsibilities too. It is not a pious hope that we might love – it is a commandment to love. But how can we possibly commit to that in this world?

To me, this huge trust that is placed in our hands – in our souls – is to make something of our baptismal beliefs. Christianity is an evangelistic religion. We are asked to spread "the Good News". That phrase isn't my favourite: it has too many connotations of breathless evangelicals stopping people in the street to ask if they have been saved! But expressed properly it is what we are tasked with. To make a difference as Christians. And this extract from John's Gospel is a further attempt to hammer home that responsibility: Jesus tells us, "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you". Each of us has some gift to bring to this evangelistic responsibility. Remember how St. Paul describes those responsibilities: "To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom: of faith; of knowledge; of healing; the working of miracles; prophecy" etc. "All these charisms are activated" Paul tells us, "by the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually, just as the Spirit chooses".

Some people are given powerful charisms without perhaps even being aware of them. Others are nervous of their faith, and hesitate to use it. What are the talents that you are afraid to use? Most of us have some talents we don't mind using, but others that we hide away. Membership of Christ's Church brings responsibilities. We should do something with the grace we have been given. Jesus says that God will entrust to us a lot to look after, if we use what we've already got.

Let me confess that I fought against the whole idea that I might have a vocation. I found excuses in abundance. I nearly spent an entire talent of my life resisting God's quiet but insistent call. What are your excuses? We've got to use those gifts. Today we remember some people who felt bound to use the talents – the grace which they were allotted in life. We all have family or friends or ancestors who exercised those talents in the two great wars of the 20th century. Some would see it as a waste of talents; some see it as a glorification of war. But I don't believe for a minute that my grandfather, my uncles and great uncles went to war in a frenzy of blood lust. They just saw it as their duty. Whatever their motivation, many of them paid with their life, or the quality of their lives for exercising their particular talents. But they faithfully took the first step. That readiness to answer their call is why we remember them. We have each been given a precious talent at our baptism. That talent is measured as the equivalent of a lifetime's work. Let us not leave it dormant. And let us encourage one another in this lifelong journey of faith. Amen.

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.
Amen.

The Collect of Remembrance Sunday

Almighty God,
you have knit together your elect in one communion and fellowship
in the mystical body of your Son Christ our Lord:
Grant us grace so to follow your blessed saints
in all godly and virtuous living that we may come
to those inexpressible joys that you have prepared for those who truly love you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

For the Fallen

by Laurence Binyan

They went with songs to the battle, they were young.
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.
They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted.
They fell with their faces to the foe.
They shall not grow 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.

A Litany of Remembrance of all people:

Response: ***We will remember them***

Let us remember those who have lived and loved;
those who have left us a blessed heritage. **[R]**
Let us remember the light-filled ones who re-kindled our spirits with their influence,
and the spark of their beliefs. **[R]**
Let us remember the risk-takers, who faced their fears and took action,
who sought justice even though they had to pay a price for it. **[R]**
Let us remember the vulnerable ones, who allowed us to care for them,
allowed us to be with them in their time of need. **[R]**
Let us remember the faith-filled ones
who led us by word and example into a deeper relationship with God. **[R]**
Let us remember the brave ones,
who walked through their struggles with hope, who taught us how to trust. **[R]**
Let us remember the great lovers of life,
whose humour and enthusiasm lifted our spirits and brought us joy. **[R]**
Let us remember the nurturers, who gave us birth physically or spiritually,
who gave us support by their caring presence. **[R]**

The Lord's Prayer

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.

An Act of Commitment

Let us commit ourselves to responsible living and faithful service:

Will you strive for all that makes for peace? **We will**

Will you seek to heal the wounds of war? **We will**

Will you work for a just future for all humanity? **We will**

**Merciful God, we offer the fears in us that have not yet been cast out by love:
May we accept the hope you have placed in the hearts of all people,
and live lives of justice, courage and mercy;
through Jesus Christ our risen Redeemer. Amen.**

Dismissal:

Neither death nor life can separate us from the love of God.

Thanks be to God. Amen.