

CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 230

Remembrance Sunday 12th November 2023

‘Virtually Church but with some way to go...’

Welcome

Welcome to Cutting Edge Camelot on this Remembrance Sunday.

‘When you go home, tell them of us and say,

For your tomorrow, we gave our today.’

Kohima Epitaph

Scripture Passage

Romans 8: 31-39

What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ³² He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? ³³ Who will bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. ³⁵ Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all day long;
we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.”

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Reflection

Remembrance Sunday is always relevant and important. But perhaps this year it is even more relevant. One senior figure from the world of finance commented recently that he believed that, as a whole, the world was in a more dangerous state than it had been for decades.

And if we look around us, it will not take us long to find reasons for this view. There has been an ongoing and serious war in the Ukraine for the best part of two years. And now, on top of this, there is a conflict in the Middle East which may prove to be equally dangerous and destructive if not even more so.

So, as we look back at past conflicts and remember the sacrifices made by so many, service people and civilians alike, we also look around us with a renewed sense of prayerful vigilance.

However, we can find it difficult to understand from a distance the complexities of wars and their strategies and decisions which could have been made this way or that way. These can be very difficult to disentangle without having very specialist knowledge.

Much easier for us to relate to and understand are the individual stories which emerge out of the horror of war. And indeed, on Remembrance Sunday, as we read out the names of the people on the War Memorial, we remember that these were all individuals with their own stories to tell, precious and loved by their family and friends.

However, the public stories of war tend to concern a few people in prominent positions such as monarchs or politicians. How much more could we learn if we knew the individual stories of all those who lost their lives in the course of these conflicts?

And so, I found a lecture given earlier this year within the Camelot Parishes very instructive. It was given by Graham Dunlop, a military historian and former member of the Royal Marines. It concerned a group of Royal Marine canoeists in the Second World War whom we now know as the Cockleshell Heroes. In a very risky raid, they managed to destroy enemy shipping stationed at Bordeaux. This raid damaged the German supply chain.

The speaker wondered whether it was really suitable to give a lecture about the horrors of war in order to raise funds for the church. But he had thought about the matter and he had concluded that it was suitable and he believed that the reasons for this would emerge as he told the story of the Cockleshell Heroes.

He did not, however, spell out his reasons so I hope that the account which I am about to give accurately reflects his thinking.

First of all, he went into great detail about the lives and backgrounds of each of the ten Royal Marines involved in this operation. And more than that as he showed us photographs of each of these men, he asked us to look into their faces. These are not the faces of killers, he said.

By remembering the stories of individual people caught up in conflicts, we are also reminding ourselves of the larger Christian truth that each person is made in the image of God. Each individual human life matters and is important to God.

When discussing questions of war, we often find ourselves speaking of the 'lesser of two evils.' This is indeed a tragic choice to make because the lesser of two evils is still evil. Although this does not relate to war, our recent experience during the pandemic reminds us that sometimes tragic choices such as between health and social wellbeing are inevitable and have to be made.

However, underlying this principle of the lesser of two evils is a respect for life, human life made in the image of God, and a desire wherever possible to preserve life rather than to destroy it.

And so in the context of the Cockleshell heroes, their daring and dangerous raid was an alternative to the bombardment of the shipping. Its aim and result was to minimise any civilian casualties. And more than that, in the opinion of Churchill, their action resulted in the shortening of the Second World War by six months with all that this meant in terms of saving life.

And yet for all this, the raid was a costly one. Ten Marines set out in the full knowledge of the extraordinary risks that they were taking. Sadly, only two out of the ten survived. The rest sacrificed their lives for the sake of the success of that mission.

As well as our Christian belief that each person is made in the image of God, we also remember the sacrifice that Christ made so that each of us can enjoy lasting fellowship with God.

Our passage from Romans speaks of Christ's death and what it means. Christ's death died for all of us regardless of what we might deserve. Indeed, St Paul reminds us elsewhere that it is 'while we still were sinners that Christ died for us' (Romans 5: 8).

And as we accept that Christ died for us, for you and for me, so we are led into a lasting fellowship and relationship with God which even death cannot break. St Paul asks 'Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?'

And to this question he gives the confident answer 'I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things

to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

Sometimes, we can find these truths difficult to hold onto. Perhaps they are especially difficult in times of war. And yet this passage from Romans contains a note of realism which is particularly appropriate in the circumstances of war.

It contains a quote from Psalm 44, "For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.". This psalm voices the questions and protests of soldiers who have been defeated in war and who have witnessed the deaths of comrades in arms. Why has God not protected them from this disaster? Is it because He does not care? Or does He not have the power to protect them? We seem to be just sheep led to the slaughter, of no account in the greater scheme of things.

However, St Paul in quoting this cry of despair from Psalm 44 places it within a new context. This enables even this depth of pain to be encompassed within a framework of hope. This Christian hope is that whatever happens to us nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

On this Remembrance Sunday may we remember and honour the stories of individual people, both known to us and unknown, who have suffered in war and have made sacrifices for the sake of others. And may we do this in the light of our Christian understanding that all human beings are made in the image of God and that Christ died for all to bring them and us into a living and lasting relationship with God.

Tristram

Prayers for Remembrance Sunday

Let us pray for all who suffer as a result of conflict,
and ask that God may give us peace:
for the service men and women
who have died in the violence of war,
each one remembered by and known to God;
Lord in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

For those who love them in death as in life,
offering the distress of our grief
and the sadness of our loss;
Lord in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

For all members of the armed forces
who are in danger this day,
remembering family, friends
and all who pray for their safe return;
Lord in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

For civilian men, women and children
whose lives are disfigured by war or terror,
calling to mind in penitence
the anger and hatreds of humanity;
Lord in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

For those who suffer as a result of present day conflicts
in the Ukraine, the Middle East and elsewhere in the world,
asking for just and lasting peace and the encouragement of
humanitarian efforts to help those caught up in these conflicts;
Lord in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

For peacemakers and peacekeepers,
who seek to keep this world secure and free;
Lord in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

For all who bear the burden and privilege of leadership,
political, military and spiritual;
asking for gifts of wisdom and discernment
in the search for reconciliation and peace;
Lord in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

Loving Father,
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 brokenness of this world,
and grant us the grace to pray for our enemies.
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.

Hymn

A well known hymn which we often sing on Remembrance Sunday is
'Eternal Father, strong to save.'

Services for this week and next

Sunday 12 th November	10.50 am Remembrance Day Service North Cadbury
Sunday 12 th November	10.50 am Remembrance Day Service Yarlington
Sunday 12 th November	10.50 am Remembrance Day Service South Cadbury
Sunday 12 th November	10.50 am Remembrance Day Service Compton Pauncefoot
Sunday 12 th November	10.50 am Remembrance Day Service Maperton
Sunday 12 th November	10.50 am Remembrance Day Service Holton
Sunday 12 th November	10.50 am Remembrance Day Service North Cheriton
Sunday 19 th November	9.30 am Communion, Compton Pauncefoot
Sunday 19 th November	11.00 am Communion, Maperton
Sunday 19 th November	11.00 am Sunday Worship, North Cadbury
Sunday 19 th November	4.00 pm Evensong, Yarlington

Excalibur

Excalibur is back in paper form. It contains details of Camelot people, a record of baptisms, weddings and funerals undertaken through the church in the Camelot Parishes. The November edition of Excalibur has now been published online at camelotparishes.co.uk.

The Parish Office

If Rob is not in the Office during normal office hours please contact him via email (office@camelotparishes.org.uk) or on 01749 850934.

Growing as a worshipper, a servant and a family

*We pray that 'we might live in love,
as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us'*

(Ephesians 5: 2)