

Rector's Letter - Rev'd Jeremy Trew - November 2024

Dear All

This month we will be gathering outside our local church to remember those from our communities who died serving in our armed forces in the wars of the last century and of this one. Some of you may recognise names recorded on the Roll of Honour. For more and more of us the names are those of strangers. Nevertheless, we may be moved by the number of names lost from just one small community, and sense the scale of loss through war; or, we may hear more of people with shared surnames, reminding us that whole families were and are affected by conflict. That, of course, is the whole point of Remembrance Sunday. It is intended to provoke us; to awaken us to the lasting significance of events which happened further and further in our past.



As I write this the war in the Middle East is rapidly expanding as the suffering nation of Lebanon is drawn once again into its role of punch-bag, caught between greater powers, and talks of strikes on Iran intensify. The war between Ukraine and Russia rumbles on with neither side being able to land the crucial blow. The combined economies of the West seemingly unable to out-supply the “industrial might” of the tiny land of North Korea. Politics is, of course, at the root of this, with more European nations turning to extreme right-wing ideologies. We will gather and read names of those who gave their lives opposing such ideology. That is true patriotism, not the hate filled messages of the nationalists. And we should go further; Sudan, Myanmar, Somalia, and the fifty-plus other nations where there is conflict. Where is God in all this? Especially when many claim to fight and kill in the name of their divinity.

When things go wrong we understandably look for someone to blame; it might be God, it might be the “system”, and we might be right. But, if we fail to acknowledge our own role in what has happened then we can never understand why things keep going wrong. It is one of the complex ironies of humanity that all too often we are both part of the problem and part of the solution. I am convinced that the careful use of armed force can help bring lasting peace. But I am just as convinced that if this Remembrance Sunday we fail to hear the names being read, to learn the lessons from the past, and to acknowledge our own contribution to the sins of this world, both as a nation and individually, then such missions will ultimately fail. That would be tragic, both for the people of these distraught nations, and for all humanity.

So, at this time of Remembrance, let us listen and let us learn.

Best wishes

Jeremy

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