

Remembrance Sunday2020

Revd Alan F. Miller

Hymn Behold! The mountain of the Lord

CALL TO WORSHIP

The minister says:

We are met this day
to glorify God whose power sustains the world;
to remember with thanksgiving
those who lived and died
in the service of our country;
and to ask for God's help and blessing,
that we may be worthy of their sacrifice
each day of our life.

God is our refuge and our stronghold,
a timely help in trouble.

Those who look to the Lord
will win new strength,
they will soar as on eagles' wings;
they will run and not feel faint,
march on and not grow weary.

PRAYERS

The minister says:

Let us pray.

Eternal God,
you are the shepherd of our souls,
the giver of life everlasting.
On this day
when we commemorate and commend to you
those who lived and died
in the service of others,
we are glad to remember
that your purposes for us are good,
that you gave Jesus Christ
for the life of the world,
and that you lead us by his Holy Spirit
into the paths of righteousness and peace.
Merciful and faithful God,
your purpose is to fold both earth and heaven
in a single peace.

With sorrow we confess
that in our hearts we keep alive
the passions and pride
that lead to hatred and to war.
We are not worthy of your love,
nor of the sacrifice made by others on our behalf.

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Almighty God,
pardon and deliver us from all our sins,
confirm and strengthen us in all goodness,
and keep us in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

CALL TO REMEMBRANCE

Let us remember the kindness of God,
and his favour to us in our time of need.
Let us remember the courage,
devotion to duty,
and the self-sacrifice
of the men and women in our armed forces;
the toil, endurance, and suffering
of those who were not in uniform;
the support of those who sent us help from afar,
or came and stood by our side.

Let us remember those
who were wounded in the fight;
those who perished in air-raids at home;
those who fell in battle,
and are buried at sea
or in some corner of a foreign field;
and especially those
whom we have known and loved,
whose place is for ever in our hearts.

Let us remember those who were our enemies,
whose homes and hearts are as bereft as ours,
whose dead lie also
in a living tomb of everlasting remembrance.

Let us remember those who came back;

those whose lives still bear the scars of war;
those who lost sight or limbs or reason;
those who lost faith in God
and hope for humanity.

Let us remember the continuing grace of God,
whose love holds all souls in life,
and to whom none is dead
but all are alive for ever.

THE TRYST

'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.

Silence is kept for two minutes.

PRAYER

In memory of those who died,
may we be better men and women;
and in gratitude to God,

may we live as those who are not their own
but who are bought with a price.

God of unbounded grace,
you declared your reconciling love and power
in the death and resurrection
of our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Teach us, who live only in your forgiveness,
to forgive one another.
Heal our divisions,
cast out our fears,
renew our faith in your unchanging purpose
of goodwill and peace on earth;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns
with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON Micah 4:1 - 5

GOSPEL: Matthew 5: 1-13

SERMON

As we gather here for this service of Remembrance in very different, and more difficult, circumstances from years past, we hold before God the memory of those who gave their lives in time of war, we give thanks for their sacrifice, and we honour their memory, praying that the day will dawn when wars cease, and the peoples of the world will live in peace with one another.

This year marks the 100th anniversary, following the end of the First World War, of the burial of the unknown soldier in Westminster Abbey, and of the unveiling of the Cenotaph on Whitehall, that stands on Whitehall as a memorial to those who lost their lives in that First War, then to those who died in the Second World War that followed only twenty years later, and in the wars that have followed since.

An unknown soldier and an empty tomb – for that is what a cenotaph is – bear witness to the grief of a nation traumatised by the experience of the carnage of a war that saw almost every family in the country lose fathers, brothers, uncles, sons: the unfathomable sense of loss, and the determination never to let it happen again.

We remember them, so that we do not forget the terrible cost of war; yet the truth is that wars have not ceased, and peace has not been established, and the vision of a different world that Micah proclaims remains unfulfilled and seems as distant now as it ever has. Still, that vision offers us a hope that we can never abandon; it is a hope that is grounded in the promise of God of a world made new, in which justice is established and peace reigns for ever.

It is a hope embodied in the person of Jesus Christ, who proclaimed a new way of living: a time of blessing for the poor, the humble, the compassionate, the seekers after truth and makers of peace. As Christ came to reconcile the world to God, so Christ also shows the way for the world to be reconciled with itself: acknowledging what is wrong, repenting of our

mistakes, and striving to live by his example, that women and men of every nation and people might flourish and know a true fullness of life as God intends.

Today, let us acknowledge the need to repent of what we have got wrong: to repent of our failure to make peace and to keep it; to repent of any arrogance and pride; and repent of our willingness to take up arms, when we know that war will never bring us to the peace, security and prosperity for all nations and every people that is at the heart of Micah's prophetic vision.

We must learn to see ourselves as part of one world, in which all peoples must seek to be reconciled with one another, and to share this world's resources equitably, that together we might build a world in which human lives are grounded not in self-seeking or misplaced national pride, nor in the need to dominate and exploit others, but in the overwhelming desire for the enduring peace and prosperity of every nation and every people.

PRAYERS

The minister says:

Let us pray.

God of power and love,
bless our country and commonwealth.
Give wisdom and strength to the Queen,
govern those who make the laws,
guide those who direct our common life,
and grant that together we may fulfil our service
for the welfare of all peoples
and for your praise and glory.
Bless and protect all who serve in the armed forces.
Give them courage to meet
all occasions with discipline and loyalty.
So may they serve
the cause of justice and peace,
to the honour of your name.

Bless our young people.
May they never see the flames of war,
or know the depths of cruelty
to which men and women can sink.
Grant that in their generation
they may be know you as a God
of love and life, and fulfill their calling

to service, through Jesus Christ.

Bless our friends
and those who were our enemies,
who suffered or are still suffering from war.
Grant that your love
may reach out to the wounded,
the disabled, the mentally distressed,
and those whose faith has been shaken
by what they have seen and endured.

Comfort all who mourn the death of loved ones,
and all who this day
miss the comradeship of friends.
Bless those who are homeless,
those who are refugees,
those who are hungry,
those who have lost their livelihood or security.
Help us to pledge ourselves
to comfort, support, and encourage others,
that all may live in a world
where evil and poverty are done away
and where human life
reflects the radiance of your kingdom.

Bless those in authority in every land,
and give them wisdom to know
and courage to do what is right.
Encourage those who work for peace,
who strive to improve international relations,
who seek new ways of reconciling
people of different race, colour, and creed.

Bless your Church throughout the world.
By your Holy Spirit,
draw the scattered flock of Christ
into a visible unity,
and make your Church
a sign of hope to our divided world.

Grant that we who bear your Son's name
may be instruments of your peace,
bringing peace to our homes,
our nation, and our world.

And now, rejoicing in the communion of saints,
we remember those whom you have gathered
from the storm of war

into the peace of your presence,
and give you thanks
for those whom we have known,
whose memory we treasure.

May the example of their devotion inspire us,
that we may be taught to live
by those who learned to die.
And at the last, grant that we,
being faithful till death,
may receive with them
the crown of life that never fades;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Father . . .

Hymn Now thank we all our God

BLESSING

The minister says:
Let us pray.

God grant to the living, grace;
to the departed, rest;
to the Church, the Queen, the Commonwealth,
and all people,
peace and concord;
and to us and all his servants
life everlasting.
And the blessing of God almighty,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be with you all. Ame