



Remembrance Sunday 2020

1 Cor 15: 51-57 & Jn 6: 37-40

A shot rang out in the street, like the sound of a car backfiring. He dropped to the ground, feverishly scanning the second floor windows for a sniper. Sweat breaking out in his body. His stomach turning into a mass of tightly tied knots. 'Where was his weapon?' His wife looked on wondering what had happened, whilst shoppers passed by, hurrying about their daily task oblivious to the drama playing out in the ex-soldiers head.

So began a story I read, some years ago, about a US army veteran on a shopping trip in his home town in Texas.

Remembrance of events in our lives can change us irrevocably forever. Sometimes

those events remove our lives, and our loved ones, from us.

November, is a month of gloom and storm. The ground is carpeted with decaying fallen leaves as the damp and cold replaces the warmth of our summer lives.

On the 11th November at the 11th hour 1918, the first armistice began. The fighting stopped, as a prelude to the beginning of the Peace negotiations that ended the First World War. *Armistice* is Latin for “to stand (still) arms.”¹

We gather to honour the dead, and those affected by combat in the two world wars and the conflicts that have engaged our armed forces since that first Armistice Day in 1918 102 years ago.

¹ <https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-involved/remembrance/about-remembrance/armistice-day>



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This year Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day are different. We are not allowed to gather around our War Memorials and Cenotaphs. We must gather, separated, in our homes and churches. Socially distanced, in this 'new world' we inhabit. A world that cost so much, for those who sacrificed their lives, that we may live in freedom.



(Light a candle)

In the lighting of this simple candle we show our wish to recognise and protect something wise and eternal in each of us and our thoughts are drawn to those who have crossed over 'the threshold'.

Holy Church keeps the Feast of St. Martin of Tours on the 11th November. He was a Roman soldier who famously cut his cloak in two when he met a beggar at a city gate. It is said that the bystanders laughed. They didn't recognise the stranger Christ. In St. Martin we learn the gift of sharing. Christ shows us how to live unconditionally.

And so our candle burns on...

We do not often consider the suffering of others. If we shut it out we only see one side of this strange and fearful thing, the life of human kind. Brightness, and happiness, and rest – that is not life. It is only one side of life:



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Christ saw both sides.
Being a follower of Christ

means bearing a suffering that is unendurable to the majority of mankind. Our scriptures tell us:

let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed! ⁵² It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed
1 Cor 15: 51,52

The flickering light of this humble candle has the possibility to bring light into darkness. Our Faith in Christ teaches us that death is not the end of the story. It is a beginning...

For those soldiers, sailors, airmen and civilians who gave their lives in conflict, our Faith teaches us that this is but a beginning.

For those maimed, and changed by their experience of war and life our society should stand alongside them – sharing their cloak of love. To bring warmth and security to those who have none.

This is a Remembrance Sunday like no other. Let us pray that next year we can meet in a more usual way to remember with thanks those who gave their todays, that we may enjoy the freedoms that we have, perhaps, taken for granted for too long.

The world we inhabit this morning/afternoon is a world which those who died in conflict would not recognise. The news and the effects of the virus have given our lives a surreal feel.

Followers of Jesus walk the path of selfless Love. We have a love that is to be shared. Shared like St. Martin's cloak.



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We gather to remember
and give thanks for those

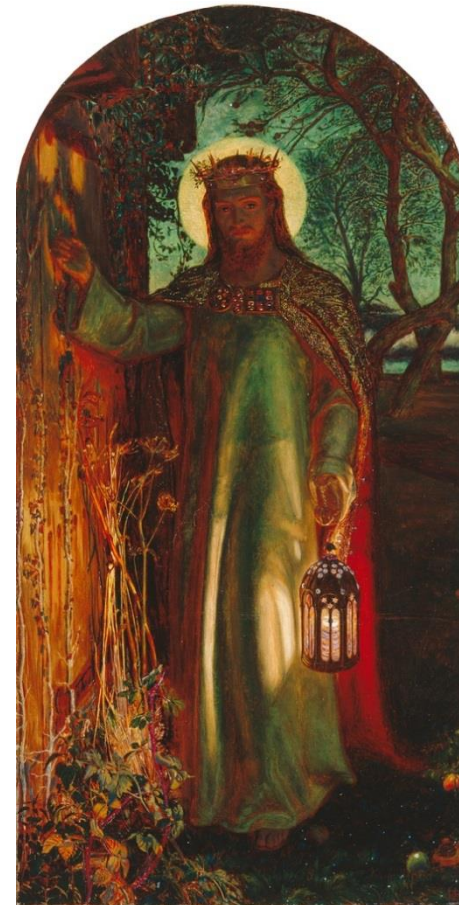
who gave so much in the service of their
country and so our humble candle burns...

Showing us the Way of Christ. Illuminating the
darkness of the year and our lives.

Jesus said:

*I will take my flame
out into the dark and the wind.
It will be safe inside
The bright lantern I have made.
Look out for me
coming through the starry night.²*

Let us not be afraid.



² p.47 Shaping the Flame