

RESOURCES FOR REMEMBRANCE FROM SERVICE CHAPLAINS

The following pages contain material used by some of our Service Chaplains. These are offered to our civilian colleagues as a resource as we prepare to celebrate the Season of Remembrance.

Also recommended is Padre Brian Elliott's book
'They shall grow not old: Resources for Remembrance, Memorial and Commemorative Services'
(Canterbury Press, Norwich, 2006)

Remembrance Quotes

*Here dead lie we because we did not choose
To live and shame the land from which we sprung.
Life, to be sure is nothing much to lose:
But young men think it is, and we were young.*
A E Houseman

*Where do all the women who have watched so carefully over the lives of their beloved ones get the heroism
to send them to face the cannon?*
Ka Kollwitz

*War: first, one hopes to win; then one expects the enemy to lose; then, one is satisfied that he too is
suffering; in the end, one is surprised that everyone has lost.*
Karl Kraus

*Those who dare to interpret God's will must never claim Him as an asset for one nation or group rather than
another. War springs from the love and loyalty which should be offered to God being applied to some God
substitute, one of the most dangerous being nationalism.*
Robert Runcie

*To delight in war is a merit in the soldier, a dangerous quality in the captain, and a positive crime in the
statesman.*
George Santayana

Some Suggested Readings for Remembrance

Psalm 46

Psalm 90:1-17

Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8

Micah 4:1-5

Matthew 5: 1-16

John 15: 1-17

1 Corinthians 15: 50-58

Ephesians 6: 10-18, 23-24

An Order of Service for Remembrance Sunday

Introduction Chaplain

Hymn: "O God, our Help"

Readings: Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8; Micah 4: 1-5 Reader

Prayer

The Act of Remembrance

The Ode

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.

All: We will remember them.

The Last Post

Silence

(The Reveille)

Laying of Wreaths

Prayer Chaplain

Intimations

Hymn: "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty"

Prayer

Bible Reading: John 15: 5-17 Reader

Sermon

Hymn: "Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son"

Prayers Chaplain

Hymn: "And did those feet in ancient time"

Act of Commitment Chaplain

Let us pledge ourselves anew to the service of God and our fellow men, that we may be peacemakers in our homes, in our community, in our country and in our world.

All: Lord God, we pledge ourselves to serve you and all mankind in the cause of peace and for the relief of want and suffering. Give us wisdom; give us courage; give us hope; and keep us always faithful. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer:

The National Anthem

The Benediction Chaplain

An Act of Remembrance

In Memory

Reader 1

Remember Ypres, Gallipoli, the Somme, Mons and Verdun. Remember the Western Desert, El Alamein, the Normandy beaches. Remember Coventry, Dresden, Hiroshima and the Burma Road. Remember Korea, the Falkland Islands, Northern Ireland, the Balkans, East Timor, Afghanistan and the Gulf.

Remember the courage, the comradeship, the ingenuity, the spirit of working together for a common cause, the planning together for a better world that would come with peace.

Remember the call to arms, the patriotic songs, the partings which were such sweet sorrow. The sound of the drum, the skirl of the pipe, the prayer that God would be on our side.

Remember the carnage; the colossal horror of war. Remember the widows of sixty years and more, the old men and women who never knew their fathers. Remember the love that was lost, the wisdom wasted, the minds that are still pained by memories. Remember the families bereft by recent wars and conflict.

Remember this day the children who will die while nation fights nation. Remember the One who asked us to remember them.

Father, remember us; and forgive us our sins against you and our fellow man.

The Act of Remembrance

Padre

Let us remember before God those who have died for their country in war; those whom we knew, and whose memory we treasure; and all who have lived and died in the service of mankind.

The Ode

Reader 2

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.

All: We will remember them.

The Silence

In Flanders Fields

Reader 3

In Flanders fields, the poppies grow
between the crosses, row on row,
that mark our places; and in the sky
the larks, still bravely singing, fly
scarce heard amongst the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
we lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
loved and were loved, and now we lie
in Flanders fields.

Take up your quarrel with the foe;
to you from failing hands we throw
the torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
we shall not sleep, though poppies grow
in Flanders fields.

Dr John McCrae, 1914/1915

Prayers

Padre

Almighty and eternal God, from whose love in Christ we cannot be parted, either by death or life: hear our prayers and thanksgivings for all whom we remember this day. Fulfil in us, as in them, the purpose of your love; and bring us all to your eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord God of the nations, whose sovereign rule brings justice and peace, have mercy on our broken and divided world. Pour out your peace into the hearts of all, that all races and peoples may learn to live as members of one family in obedience to your law, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Remembrance Sermon Outline No. 1

John 15:13 – “Greater Love”

Introduction

- Have you been busy raking leaves? *Why* do leaves fall?
 - Leaves can only make food when they have enough sunlight...
 - Most deciduous leaves cannot survive freezing temperatures...
 - Trees lose water through their leaves. If deciduous trees kept their leaves when the ground froze, they would continue losing water...
 - Many leaves are damaged by leaf-eating insects, eggs and larvae...
- Basically, the leaf has become useless + a liability = “*the weakest link*”!
- So the tree protects itself from the leaf, which it abandons to the winds!
- Connection with Remembrance Sunday?
 - See John 15 – incl v13...
 - Jesus knows what is about to happen (arrest, trial, death, resurrection, ascension). He impresses on his disciples their need to remain in fellowship with him + true to him... He speaks of the vine and branches; I have spoken of a tree and its leaves. The point is, Jesus – the vine or the tree – does not cast off his branches or leaves! But do they abandon him?
 - According to Jesus, the essence of fellowship with him is love (9, 10) – a love that proves itself by obedience. And the primary proof of obedience is love for one another (12, 13). It is easy to *say* we love God, but we *show* it by loving God’s people! And it is easy to *say* we love others, but we show it ultimately by –? Verse 13. (If we won’t give less, how can we say we will give more?)
- Taking v13 as my text..., I want to look a little further at fallen leaves.

1 – Fallen Leaves

- Today we honour those who laid down their lives for us...
 - Untold numbers in two World Wars and conflicts since – incl Iraq and Afghanistan
 - Fallen leaves – not shed *by* their nation, but “*laid down their lives for their friends*”!
- Today, we honour their memory. We recall their sacrifice. We thank God for deliverance gained at such a price.
- A soldier may go to war in quest of adventure or out of high principles and ideals; but when he fights to the death it is for his mates/friends. He will do anything for them. They are a team. (And an Army must work as a team!)
- Verse 13... I think of the great love shown by those whose names we honour today. I imperfectly assess the measure of their love by the sacrifice they made. Thereby, they took up the mantle of our Lord’s example and instruction.

2 – The First Leaf

- Jesus is not just the tree – he is also a leaf that fell. When Jesus speaks of the love that lays down its life, he is not committing us to a path he has not himself trodden. (What a lesson in leadership!)
- Where in all the world do we see greater love than the love of the Lord Jesus, who laid down his life for those – once his enemies – whom he names his friends?
 - He left the comfort and glory of his Father’s right hand, to come to a world of darkness, suffering, sin and death – to bear the taunts and rejection of men and women who questioned his motives and

challenged his authority. And why? To open up the only way by which sinners such as you and I might be restored to life and to peace with God!

- I ask you today, in considering those men and women who took literally the challenge of the Lord's words, have you taken a long, hard look at what Jesus Christ himself did in suffering, dying and rising again to rescue us from a fate far worse than death?
 - Have you knelt before his Cross and cried out, "Lord Jesus, considering your great love for me, and my death you took for me, I take you as my Saviour and my Lord; I ask you into my heart. Wash me clean; save me; make me new; and keep me for all eternity!" Call upon him now: for now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation! Verse 13...

3 – A Leaf out of His Book

- I see from this passage that Jesus bids you and me follow the example he has set, v13...
 - To mirror his great love – what costly love!
 - To lay life itself upon the altar, and if needs be to yield it up!
- Not only those who have served in war, but each of us is called daily to follow the example of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- How can we measure up to this calling?
 - Not by the strength of our own inner resources, but by the power of his life within us!
 - Hence the Psalmist's words in Ps 71...
 - Therefore, abide in him! (He does not shed his leaves; but have we left him?)
 - If we try to do it on our own, we are like my lounge-room clock...
 - The Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is the very power of God! He does not call us to go where he himself has not gone, nor where he will not go with us. The call may be daunting, but he will give you strength; only ask and see for yourself that the Lord is rich and abundant in his kindness to all who put their trust in him!
- *Verse 13:*
 - Some have been called on to die for their friends.
 - The rest of us have been called to live for ours. There is still a commitment. There is still a cost. There is also a promised strength (v10)...

Conclusion

- We have all been called to love and to serve, if need be, to lay down our lives... May God help us to serve wholeheartedly and unreservedly! And to know the dignity of true service!
- The fallen leaf perishes; but those who serve in the name of Christ will never perish: for he gave his life that we might live with him forever. What a price! What a victory! v13...

Remembrance Sermon Outline No. 2

Ecclesiastes 3:8

What are we doing here today?

We are meeting to worship God, to remember those who served – especially those who paid the supreme sacrifice (“Greater love hath no man than this...”) – and to re-evaluate the direction of our own lives before Almighty God.

All too often we only begin to think about God at times of crisis in our lives. But, if that is the case, don’t stop thinking about him when the clouds clear and the sun shines again! Don’t just meet God here this morning, but go with him and take him with you when you leave here today!

But you say the Bible isn’t relevant to you?

- ✓ Cf “Padre, I don’t believe in God or religion... (*45 minutes later:*) Do you think the Bible would help me?”
- ✓ Cf “This Psalm was written all about me. Everything it says describes exactly what’s going on in my life... the depths I am in...”
- ✓ Cf “I want to believe before it’s too late.”
- ✓ Cf 90% (acc to Major B) took their Bibles with them after sanitisation...
- ✓ Cf message from King George VI in WWII NT...
- ✓ Don’t leave it till it’s too late!

But what about your life? Have you tried religion and found it has failed you? Are the questions life throws up more complex than Christianity deals with?

Why not turn to the Book of Ecclesiastes (= the context of 3: 8!)?!

(1) MID-LIFE CRISES – AND EVERY OTHER KIND OF CRISIS

The title of the book sounds very strange to us, but it simply means “Preacher”

As a Preacher, he has just one message: “What is life all about?”

Some of the problems he deals with are these:

- ✓ Why is life so short?
- ✓ Why does nothing last?
- ✓ Why don’t even wisdom and learning hold the answers?
- ✓ Why doesn’t money make me happy?
- ✓ Why doesn’t sex give more than temporary pleasure?
- ✓ Why do fools often get into positions of power, while the wise and learned are ignored by the media and ruling elite?
- ✓ Why do some people win the lottery, only to waste it all – while I never seem to win anything at all?
- ✓ Why does a man often work hard all his life, only to lose everything? Why does he retire with great dreams and then fall seriously ill the next day?

He even describes an experiment (ch 2ff) to check this all out for himself!

Cf Alexander the Great's tears when there were no more empires to conquer!

(2) ENJOY LIFE DAY-BY-DAY

Enjoy it while you can, says the Preacher!

Enjoy the good things God has given you, while recognising that life doesn't contain its own answer!
(*frequently*)

Avoid extremes (7: 15-18).

Aim high, but be realistic.

There will always be wars and rumours of wars... Serve your own generation!

Yes, enjoy the good things God has given you...

... **But**, what's it all about?

(3) KEEP THE ONE MAIN THING IN VIEW

Yet still the heart sighs! Our greatest fear is of being forgotten and of finding everything is meaningless (1: 11; 2: 16). We all want something that lasts!

Life doesn't contain its own answer – nor can it! (Rom 8: 20) – but God has provided the answer:

- ✓ Eccles 12: 1, 13-14 (the climax of the book)
- ✓ Beyond Ecclesiastes: **Christ our Wisdom**
 - We do not look to Christ to save us from this meaningless world, but because **he is the meaning!**

What does this mean for you?

“Fighting McKenzie” was a WWI Padre, loved by his soldiers because he was always with them in danger. Though often ordered back, he would always reappear at the front line to encourage the living and minister to the dying. During one particularly hot battle, he came across a badly wounded soldier, obviously beyond help. “Padre,” the soldier cried in anguish, “do you know a Catholic prayer?” “I think I do, my boy,” replied Mac with great tenderness. “Say this after me, son: ‘God be merciful to me a sinner... I now lay my sins on Jesus.’” With great difficulty, and obviously in pain, the boy nevertheless whispered the words as the Padre Mac held his hand, and with the peace of God upon his face the young soldier passed away. [*Fighting McKenzie*, p.86]

Turn to him! Live in him!

How do you do this? Begin at the beginning...(Why Christ died... [*Develop this!*])

Nothing is more important for you and for our nation today than to return to this message!

“Remember”...

“Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”

Remembrance Sermon Outline No. 3

“It is fine and honourable to be a Scottish Soldier”

There are many aspects of the honour connected to serving in the Armed Forces – here are three:

It is honourable:

- **To Serve**
- **To Lead**
- **To Sacrifice**

SERVICE

It is no mistake that members of the Armed Forces are described as taking part **MILITARY SERVICE**. Our Armed Forces are a body of men and women who **SERVE** our Queen and Country, who **SERVE** the causes of Peace and Justice and Equality for all humanity, who **SERVE** as directed by our political masters and by those in command over us.

SERVICE involves giving of your best in order to achieve the goals and purposes of **SOMEONE ELSE’S AGENDA**.

King David is described in Acts 13:36 as having served God’s purposes during his lifetime. For Christians the supreme example of service is that of our Lord, the suffering servant, who at the most challenging moment of his earthly life was able to say to his Heavenly Father, “Thy will, not mine, be done.”

A good servant is in many ways invisible, working away from the eyes of publicity, achieving success which brings glory or rewards, not to themselves, but to those whom they serve.

IT IS HONOURABLE TO SERVE!

LEADERSHIP

Military life requires a highly developed understanding and execution of the skills of leadership. The ability to get the best out of men and women in situations in which their life and limb is endangered, to instil discipline and control in settings of confusion and disorder, to inspire the highest levels of courage and selfless commitment is no mean feat.

And as we honour our Armed Forces past and present today, we recognise the over-riding importance of leadership and our debt to those who have exercised the highest levels of leadership at all ranks and in all services.

But we also recognise the Leadership role of the Armed Forces throughout society and in the civilian community. As young men and women are taken out of everyday society to be trained and strengthened, so they are returned as men and women of discipline and character who contribute to the wider society.

Of course we will always be able to find examples where it has not gone so well, but the norm is the positive, powerful contribution of our Veterans who often return to civvy street as rough diamonds who have been polished by their military service, ready to continue to serve our country in their everyday lives, and top provide leadership by their standards and lives.

IT IS HONOURABLE TO LEAD!

SACRIFICE

It was Christ himself who spoke these much quoted words “Greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:13)

The sacrifice made by members of our Armed Forces and by their families is a remarkable one. Of course there is the Ultimate Sacrifice of the loss of life, but we must never forget that our service men and women are called to a life of sacrifice.

Freedom is Sacrificed – as the Centurion in Matthews Gospel describes – “For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and that one , ‘Come,’ and he comes. I say to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.’ (Matthew 8:9)

Domestic Stability is Sacrificed. In my own Regular Service we lived in 9 houses over 16 years.

Time spent with family and friends is Sacrificed. Service personnel are often not there at the birth of a child, or they return home after Operations to find children who have changed vastly in the intervening months.

Their families often sacrifice secure long –term employment and their children sacrifice continuous local education.

As a nation require our service personnel to be men and women of sacrifice.

IT IS HONOURABLE TO SACRIFICE!

When some soldiers asked Christ for some pointers of how they should live their lives, he replied, “Don’t extort money and don’t accuse people falsely – be content with your pay.” (Luke 3:14)

My experience of Scottish soldiers tells me that if they are not complaining then you should worry – I don’t know that they complain about their pay too much, but grumbling is often part of their lively conversation, often filled with much black humour and perhaps too often peppered with colourful language, but I have never found a lack of willingness to Serve with no holding back, to Lead by example in the face of much adversity and opposition, and to face Sacrifice as an honourable part of the life they have accepted.

IT IS AN HONOURABLE THING TO BE A SCOTTISH SOLDIER

IT IS AN HONOURABLE THING TO HAVE SERVED IN THE PAST, AND TO BE SERVING TODAY, IN THE ARMED FORCES OF THE CROWN.

IT IS HONOURABLE, AND WE HONOUR THEM TODAY.

IN FLANDERS FIELDS



*In Flanders Fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.*

*We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.*

*Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch, be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields*

In Flanders Fields was first published in England's *Punch* magazine in December 1915. Within months, this poem came to symbolize the sacrifices of all who were fighting in the First World War. Today, the poem continues to be a part of Remembrance Day ceremonies in Canada and other countries throughout the world.

The poem was written by a Canadian—John McCrae, a doctor and teacher, who served in both the South African War and the First World War.



THE POPPY

Some years ago an official of the French Embassy asked why his own country, with the highest proportion of deaths of any First World War combatant nation, did not seem able to have a national act of remembrance on the scale of the British. His question is understandable. France was devastated by 1.4 million First World War military deaths and 40,000 civilians, while Britain by comparison suffered 760,000 military deaths and barely 1,000 civilian casualties. The Second World War saw 245,000 French military deaths and 390,000 civilians, while Britain lost 388,000 servicemen along with 70,000 civilians.

Since 1921 the bright red poppy has brought the nation together like no other symbol. Blooms have long represented grief. After the American Civil War General Logan called for graves to be decorated with flowers which, on the last Monday in May, became known as Decoration Day, later Memorial Day.

Poppies grow best on broken ground and they flourished in Flanders.. Their status was transformed by a Canadian surgeon, Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, who sat down during a lull in the 1915 Battle of Ypres and wrote the poem which begins;

‘In Flanders fields the poppies blow
between the crosses, row on row’

The first poppy appeal came about as a result of a series of instant and far sighted decisions taken by a handful of people. After John McCrae’s poem was published anonymously by Punch in 1916, the women of devastated France began making poppies as well as cornflowers¹ to decorate war graves. A Madame Guerin of the French YMCA could see something bigger in the concept and campaigned vigorously to have the poppy accepted as a symbol of remembrance. Finding little success in France she took the idea to London.

In 2004, more than 4 million poppies and seven thousand wreaths were made by disabled ex-servicemen at the Lady Haig Poppy Factory in Edinburgh. Part of the proceeds from the Poppy Appeal go to maintain a 33 bed home in Glasgow and benevolence to 1,600 recipients who otherwise would remain in need.

The poppy today remains a universal symbol of bloody death, remembrance and a defiant rebirth. It carries with it sadness that men can kill on a scale that we must never forget. It takes this little flower to tell us this. It has become the soldiers most reliable friend, enduring in times of war and peace. And it unites the country like no other.

Abridged from SLN Nov/Dec 2004 p. 15.

¹ The cornflower was chosen by the French as it too grew on the Western Front.