

Berrow with Pendock, Eldersfield, Birtsmorton and Hollybush



A Service of Remembrance

THE INTRODUCTION

We have gathered together to worship Almighty God, whose purposes are good; whose power sustains the world he has made; who loves us, though we have failed in his service; who gave Jesus Christ for the life of the world; who by his Holy Spirit leads us in his way.

We remember those who have suffered through war and are in need. We ask for his help and blessing that we may do his will, and that the whole world may acknowledge him as Lord and King.

Psalm 23

**The Lord is my shepherd; therefore, can I lack nothing.
He makes me lie down in green pastures
and leads me beside still waters.
He shall refresh my soul
and guide me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil; for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
You spread a table before me in the presence of those who
trouble me;
you have anointed my head with oil and my cup shall be full.
Surely goodness and loving mercy shall follow me all the days of
my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.
Amen.**

THE FIRST HYMN – O God our help in ages past

THE ACT OF REMEMBRANCE

Let us remember before God,
and commend to his sure keeping:
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 list of those to be remembered by name is read

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.

Here follows **THE SILENCE.**

The Kohima Epitaph is said:

When you go home tell them of us and say,
for your tomorrow we gave our today.

O God of truth and justice,
we hold before you those people
who have died in active service.
As we honour their courage and cherish their memory,
may we put our faith in your future;
for you are the source of life, peace and hope,
now and for ever.

Amen.

THE SECOND HYMN – I Vow to Thee My Country

THE ACT OF PENITENCE

Let us confess to God the sins and shortcomings of the world;
its pride, its selfishness, its greed; its evil divisions and hatreds.
Let us confess our share in what is wrong, and our failure to seek and
establish that peace which God wills for his children.

**Most merciful God,
 we confess that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed.
 We have not loved you with our whole heart.
 We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.
 In your mercy forgive what we have been,
 help us to amend what we are,
 and direct what we shall be;
 that we may do justly, love mercy,
 and walk humbly with you;
 through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Almighty God, have mercy upon *us*,
 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.

BIBLE READINGS-Wisdom of Solomon 6:12-16, Matthew 25:1-13

REFLECTION

Matthew is written to the new believers; excommunicated from the synagogue and abandoned by their families and facing the imminent threat of a hostile empire without the comfort and safety of those supporting structures. Christian believers were struggling just to survive in that dark time, so there is urgency to form a bold and committed union with God as a community of faith.

Jesus' invitation to the community of believers is equally confounding: "Then the kingdom of heaven will be like...ten bridesmaids [who] took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom." So while the five who are running on empty go out looking for help, the others go into the party and shut the door. The callous groom refuses to open up even when they return well supplied with lamps burning, crying their confession of faith, "Lord, Lord." But the door remained slammed in their face with an unexpectedly terse and emphatic, "I don't know you!"

On its face this parable fits with our human experience of behaviour in a competitive society: those who store up for themselves and refuse to share seem to come out on top. Toilet rolls? Flour? Eggs? Pasta? Sound familiar? But this parable *does not* fit with other things Jesus says

in Matthew about not judging that splinter in your brother or sister's eye; if we knock, the door will be opened; or about forgiving not just seven but seventy-seven times. Where two fish were *shared* among thousands of people, with abundant leftovers. About the search for the one lost lamb.

If we are frustrated by Jesus' comparison of the kingdom to ten bridesmaids with flickering lamps--maybe that is because the kind of community to which they invite us is unlike any other, and its fullness requires more of its individual members than we care to admit. Have we forgotten about the narrow gate, the weeping and grinding of teeth, the parable of the weeds and the wheat or that other parable about the one tossed out of the wedding for being improperly dressed? Jesus said those things in Matthew, too.

This parable sign posts us to a very different situation. Spiritual fuel cannot come from someone else. There are many steps in the process and some kind of preparation we can only do for ourselves, spiritual reserves that no one else can build up for us. It's something we each have to receive, cherish, and deepen in our own souls for ourselves.

So this parable impresses upon us the importance and the urgency of fueling up. Dark times come into every life, and it's in the darkness that we most need the sustenance of the kind of oil Jesus is talking about--assurance of the abundant promises of God, peace that passes understanding, and a depth of hope that can sustain us through the darkness of disappointments and failures, devastating loss and grief--closed doors of all kinds. Today, we focus very much on war. What hope is given in times of war?

We need help urgently when situations in our own lives are extreme. We need joy urgently when the pain of loss and grief seems never-ending. What reserves did people have for the First and Second world war and subsequent wars that have raged?

People still have very powerful set of memories of past wars. How societies remember and commemorate the past often says something about how they see themselves. How should the past be remembered? When should we forget? These are not easy questions. Acknowledging such difficult parts of the past is not always easy and has led to history becoming a political football in a number of countries. The picture is not quite as simple as we might like to think. Let us remember the war, and acknowledge the many complexities.

Dark times come to every generation. Today's generations have not lived through this type of crisis before. Even those that lived through past crises stagger to know how to begin to deal with this particular terrifying crisis that lies ahead with Covid 19, severe threats of terrorism and climate changes.

Where do we seek our spiritual fuel? Enjoying time with four things in particular: our pets, family and friends, food, and finding God in the beauty of nature. These latest 'Lock Down's' have sorely tested all these things since March. Many refer back to the experiences and resilience of people during major world wars. They were indeed very testing times. Wars rage even today in several countries and those trying to flee risking their lives to seek freedom. In the past, they may have lacked our modern ways to keep in touch. But even in these unprecedented times, many situations have been hugely difficult for family, friends and community in trying to keep in contact with one another.

The cost of those past wars are evident. We only have to look at our own family history to know the cost. What kept people going then? What made the difference? How can we make a difference today for those not coping with the events we are living through now?

We look to our past and remember, lest we forget.

As it says in The Kohima Epitaph:
When you go home tell them of us and say,
for your tomorrow we gave our today.

Today, also we think about how we sustain hope and spiritual sustenance. In coping, we each have to seek our own spiritual sustenance, and as in times of fear, we discover the need as a community; seeking spiritual fuel together.

Jesus shows that life in Christ happens when two or more are gathered in his name. Christ promises to be with us, and we can be assured the Holy Spirit is among us as we are gathered together, each replenishing our spiritual reserves.

It is together through contacts, phone, what's app, zoom that together we can receive the nurture a community. Beside one another, from the Bible, and sacrament and with prayer rising up without ceasing even if in silence. Together, we can find ways to serve a world in need and witness God's constant work of resurrection and transformation. With enduring reserves of grace and joy, God's spirit moves to meet the

reality of human suffering with the mystery of hope. Beside one another, in the community of faith is where the love of God continues to appear in surprising and unexpected ways.

Jesus offers us enduring gifts of the spirit, which we cannot borrow or lend, we cannot buy or sell, we cannot earn or withhold. Our spiritual sustenance is there to receive as a gift, to share it, and to cherish it day and night. Jesus comes again to stand with us through the fearsome night, to the dawn of morning's saving light.

Amen

THE THIRD HYMN – Eternal Father Strong to Save

INTERCESSIONS

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

We pray for the leaders of the nations, who bear the burden and privilege of leadership; asking for wisdom, and resolve in the search for justice, reconciliation, truth and peace.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for those members of the armed forces who are in danger this day on behalf of the nation, that they may have discipline and discernment, courage and compassion. We remember family, friends and all who pray for their safe return.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for our enemies, and those who wish us harm, that you will turn the hearts of all to kindness and friendship.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the wounded and the captive, the grieving and the homeless, that in all their trials they may know your love and support.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Most holy God and Father hear our prayers for all who strive for peace and all who fight for justice. Help us, who today remember the cost of war, to work for a better tomorrow; and, as we commend to you lives lost in terror and conflict, bring us all, in the end, to the peace of your presence; through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray.

**Our Father,
which art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done ;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil;
for thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

THE ACT OF COMMITMENT

Let us pledge ourselves anew to the service of God
and our fellow men and women:
that we may help, encourage, and comfort others,
and support those working for the relief of the needy
and for the peace and welfare of the nations.

**Lord God our Father,
we pledge ourselves to serve you and all mankind,
in the cause of peace,
for the relief of want and suffering,
and for the praise of your name.
Guide us by your Spirit;
give us wisdom;
give us courage;
give us hope;
and keep us faithful
now and always.
Amen**

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

**God save our gracious Queen,
Long live our noble Queen,
God save the Queen.
Send her victorious,
Happy and glorious,
Long to reign over us:
God save the Queen.**

**Thy choicest gifts in store
On her be pleased to pour,
Long may she reign.
May she defend our laws,
And ever give us cause
To sing with heart and voice,
God save the Queen.**

DISMISSAL AND BLESSING

God grant to the living, grace;
to the departed, rest;
to the Church, the Queen, the Commonwealth, and all mankind, peace
and concord;
and to us and all his servants, life everlasting;
and the blessing of God almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, come
down upon you and remain with you always.
Amen.