

ANGLICAN CHAPLAINCY OF ALL SAINTS' MARSEILLE WITH AIX-EN-PROVENCE AND THE LUBERON  
RESOURCES FOR PRAYER AND REFLECTION

14<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Dear Friends,

During this time of lockdown, we are again sharing resources for prayer, poetry, music and reflection. Please feel free to send us any that you find helpful. This week we have received the following:

1 Prayers

God of compassion,  
be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation.  
In their loneliness, be their consolation;  
in their anxiety, be their hope;  
in their darkness, be their light;  
through him who suffered alone on the cross,  
but reigns with you in glory,  
Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

O God, the protector of all who trust in you,  
without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy:  
increase and multiply upon us your mercy;  
that with you as our ruler and guide,  
we may so pass through things temporal  
that we lose not our hold on things eternal;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

2 Reflections

- (a) This sermon was preached by Archbishop Justin Welby on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2020 at a service to mark the centenary of the burial of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey.

Robert Graves wrote of the kinship forged between soldiers in his poem 'The Two Fusiliers':

*'Show me the two so closely bound  
As we, by the wet bond of blood,  
By friendship, blossoming from mud,  
By Death: we faced him, and we found  
Beauty in Death  
In dead men, breath'*

The common testimony of those who fight is that, in the heat of battle, they fight for those around them – those with whom they serve.

On this Centenary of the burial of the Unknown Warrior at Westminster Abbey, we pay tribute to the many millions of men and women who have died on so many battlefields, unnamed and unclaimed, except by God. Those poignant words 'known unto God' express loss immeasurable and hope infallible. Whether on the gravestones of Flanders, Picardy and the Somme, of Kohima, Imphal or the Khyber, in a multitude of cemeteries small and large.

Yet no-one is known only to God. Even this warrior had his mother and father, had a birth, had those with whom he trained, marched, fought and died. All of those whose graves are so anonymous, so reluctant to tell their story, had those who did not know where their friends died, never found the grave, yet knew the birthday, heard the memory of the laugh, of the cry, saw the gap toothed smile and the confident swagger of the newly enlisted.

Sacrifice is not only in time of war. In war and peace, sacrifice is the virtue that smooths the rough roads over which our societies travel. This year, sacrifices have been made and are being made by thousands, even millions unknown. People have put aside all they hold dear.

We may never meet them or read their names. We might not know what they have suffered or given up. They may be anonymous, but their actions are glorious. They too are seen and known by God, who alone re-stitches the fabric of a torn and broken world but does so with the lives who knowingly or not hear his call and respond in love. From their lives comes fruit. From the life of this Unknown Warrior comes fruit of remembrance, of hope.

In the heat of the present crisis, we remember their lesson. When, as we have this year, we face deep uncertainties and difficulties, we do not just look after ourselves. We make a stand for our families, for our friends and neighbours. We look out for our loved ones, close and far, because we know that none of us are safe until all are safe. The Unknown Warrior sounds the call of sacrifice for every person.

Loss immeasurable is laid here, yet because of the resurrection, hope infallible. None live for themselves. None die unknown. No death is unmarked by God. The dark of the cross is lit with the light of resurrection – the light that this Warrior, with each of us, is offered in Christ; the light of hope and of life.

- (b) 'Christopher Columbus is out of fashion in a post-imperial world. But one thing I treasure about him. For thirteen days running as he sailed west, not knowing where he was going or if he'd fall off the map, he wrote in his log book, 'No land in sight; kept sailing.' That's faith. Which is sometimes hard to distinguish from sheer stubbornness or humble patience.

But that's what we need now. The journey to the end of the pandemic is going to be harder and longer than the road we've already travelled. But we don't travel it alone. The season of Remembrance reminds us that there are things worse than a pandemic, and people in earlier generations have suffered more than we're doing now. Those who came back from war were determined that the society that was rebuilt out of the ashes would be worthy of the sacrifices that were made to bring it about. We must be like them, and, far as we may be from land, keep sailing towards a shore better than the one we left.'

*The Revd Dr Sam Wells*

- (c) A Day Without "The News"

Go through the entire day without watching or listening to the news or reading the newspaper. Try your best to shut out the outside world, and concentrate on your own world instead. If someone you encounter wants to talk about current events or the political scene, politely inform him or her that you're taking a short break from things over which you have little control and are focusing on things you can command.

Following the news day after day can induce a feeling of depression and helplessness. Taking a respite from the constant negativity of the world scene can be rejuvenating.

Fill up the time you normally devote to following the news by doing anything else you love to do — talk to a friend, read, listen to music, go for a walk — and make sure you take note at the end of the day if you feel different from the way you normally feel.

*Alan Epstein in How to Be Happier Day by Day*

### 3 Online resources

From the growing amount of material available online we have selected the following this week, some in English, some in French:

Reflections on Gospel passages

<https://www.jesuites.ch/chroniques/vie-spirituelle-au-temps-du-coronavirus>

Short morning and evening prayer in French from the Oratoire du Louvre (Église Protestante Unie de France)

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCusl\\_V7GzOwChwUz1jL3Zxg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCusl_V7GzOwChwUz1jL3Zxg)

A guide to isolation and social distancing from the English Benedictines - videos on their YouTube channel

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCN1vt-sf6\\_sYp-0i-sTwLEQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCN1vt-sf6_sYp-0i-sTwLEQ)

For those of you who like to keep up with developments in the Church of England, recordings of services and information are available on these websites:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/>

<https://europe.anglican.org/>

#### 4 Poetry

Now we will count to twelve  
and we will all keep still  
for once on the face of the earth,  
let's not speak in any language;  
let's stop for a second,  
and not move our arms so much.

It would be an exotic moment  
without rush, without engines;  
we would all be together  
in a sudden strangeness.

Fishermen in the cold sea  
would not harm whales  
and the man gathering salt  
would not look at his hurt hands.

Those who prepare green wars,  
wars with gas, wars with fire,  
victories with no survivors,  
would put on clean clothes  
and walk about with their brothers  
in the shade, doing nothing.

What I want should not be confused  
with total inactivity.

Life is what it is about...

If we were not so single-minded  
about keeping our lives moving,  
and for once could do nothing,  
perhaps a huge silence  
might interrupt this sadness  
of never understanding ourselves  
and of threatening ourselves with  
death.

Now I'll count up to twelve  
and you keep quiet and I will go.

*Pablo Neruda – Keeping Quiet*

5 And finally...

In the past few days, tributes have been paid to Lord Sacks, former Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth from 1991 to 2013, author and broadcaster, who died this week. The last radio broadcast which I heard him give was on St Valentine's Day this year, in which he reflected on fifty years of marriage. He emphasised the importance of doing three things each day in any relationship:

- Give thanks each day for the good things.
- Find something to praise in each other, each day.
- Forgive. We all have things that need to be forgiven. The way to start is to forgive other people.

'We made these things a habit, and they have helped to guide our footsteps along the path to joy.'

Jonathan Sacks wrote and spoke many profound and scholarly things, but this was the one I remembered when I heard the news.

May Christ be with you through the coming week and give you his peace.

With every blessing,

The Revd Jamie Johnston  
Chaplain