



Praying Together

during the week beginning Sunday 8 November

The Third Sunday Before Advent

Remembrance Sunday

**DURHAM
CATHEDRAL**

THE SHRINE OF ST CUTHBERT

During this time of great anxiety and uncertainty, we want to stay in touch with our regular worshippers and indeed with everyone who is associated with the Cathedral family.

We very much regret that we have once again had to suspend congregational worship here at the Cathedral but our Sunday and daily services will continue to be live-streamed via the Cathedral's Facebook page.

However, Durham Cathedral is open for private prayer and quiet reflection between 10.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m. on weekdays and between 11.00 a.m. and 3.00 p.m. on Sundays.

Gospel

Matthew 25. 1-13

Jesus said, 'Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a shout, "Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him." Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the wise, "Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out." But the wise replied, "No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves." And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, "Lord, lord, open to us." But he replied, "Truly I tell you, I do not know you." Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

Thought for the Day

by the Reverend Canon Michael Everitt

Remembrance involves our holding onto positions that usually are contradictory. We obviously remember what was lost, the lives, or livelihoods of so many and yet we also remember what was won, peace and security. We hold onto a collective memory that includes the two world wars and the many conflicts that have followed and also personal.

Those of the serving military personnel or civilians caught up in the warfare. Our own family memories, and our local and specific focal points. Within this process of remembering we can find ourselves rejoicing at moments of fortune or grace. The uncle who had just been reassigned the day before his boat was torpedoed, and yet also of tragedy, for me summed up by a Commonwealth Grave inscription that said "And your son whom you never met."

These contrasting pairings can continue on, and many who have served in warfare will add to them. The final two that I wish to air are, holding onto an engagement with the past and seeking a commitment to the future.

As we remember we do so not simply for nostalgia or to create a national identity through our past endeavours. Whilst of course this is included, as is a monumental sense of gratitude and indebtedness. There is also the dynamic of seeking that same resolve that came with the first World War, that it should be "a war to end all wars".

Or the second world war that regimes and ideologies that forget the common humanity of all and rejoice more in evil and destruction of some, rather than goodness and flourishing of all, must be engaged with and overcome. At the same time these motivations must also shape a resolve and commitment into the future as to how we personally and collectively act and respond.

This is what is at the heart of St Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians. For here Paul reminds us that we are not isolated or separate from what has gone before. Nor are those who have died now placed simply into the past. In Jesus we are in a new order and definition that includes them into who we are and will be. Their history is as much a part of our future identity as we are, and this definition comes through the person of Jesus and the knowledge of his resurrection. And that this should bring us encouragement even when we are grieving.

This hope however should not lead us to complacency. As we know in our current situation. Our current situation where we are being reminded to wash our hands, wear face masks, and keep a distance in order to try and slow down the spread of the Covid 19 virus, place restrictions and rules on our daily lives that require a discipline and commitment to keep.

Akin to basic training we are being reminded to hold to a discipline which shapes our wider behaviour. It is not sufficient to be like some of the bridesmaids in our gospel reading and rest on our commission and not be faithful and committed to what we have been called to do. Jesus being the embodiment of God's grace upon grace (to use John's language) is for us as his disciples to seek a similar provision, not simply the bare minimum on the off chance that things will fall our way.

But a total personal commitment akin to what those whom we remember today have shown, so that whenever we are called into action, to live out our calling, we may be like those who are able to respond.

Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday today and tomorrow. Remembrance brings us into the sphere of looking back, reflecting from there into our current situation and then responding positively for the future.

Knowing that in Christ all these dimensions of time are held as a reality. It is to be shaped into that reality, fed and nurtured through him who gives us that ultimate victory even over death itself, so that "At the going down of the sun, and in the morning, we will remember them" is more than poetry it is an engagement in life to honour those who have past and those who will follow.

A Form of Intercession for Remembrance Sunday

In peace, with hope, and for reconciliation, let us pray to the Lord.

We pray for the leaders of the nations,
that you will guide them in the ways of freedom, justice and truth.

Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

We pray for those who bear arms on behalf of the nation,
that they may have discipline and discernment,
courage and compassion.

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.

We pray for the hope of tomorrow
in the young people of our world,
that they may bear the gifts of hope and reconciliation
into a brighter future.

Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

Most holy God and Father,
hear our prayers for all who strive for peace
and all who strive 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.

Calendar of Holy Days

Monday 9 November

Margery Kempe, mystic, c 1440

Tuesday 10 November

Leo the Great, bishop, teacher of the faith, 461

Wednesday 11 November

Martin, bishop, c 397

Friday 13 November

Charles Simeon, priest, evangelical divine, 1836

Saturday 14 November

Samuel Seabury, bishop, 1796

Anthem for Remembrance Sunday

Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it. Love is strong as death. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness. Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified, in the Name of the Lord Jesus; Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies, a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Words selected from Scripture

John Ireland

Hymn for Remembrance Sunday

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home;

Under the shadow of thy throne
Thy saints have dwelt secure;
Sufficient is thine arm alone,
And our defence is sure.

Before the hills in order stood,
Or earth received her frame,
From everlasting thou art God,
To endless years the same.

A thousand ages in thy sight
Are like an evening gone,
Short as the watch that ends the night
Before the rising sun.

Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
Bears all its sons away;
They fly forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the opening day.

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Be thou our guard while troubles last,
And our eternal home.

*Isaac Watts
after Psalm 90*

On Wednesday 11 November at 11.00 a.m., the Two Minutes' Silence for Armistice Day will be observed in the Cathedral and live-streamed on the Cathedral's Facebook page.

From Embarkation Leave—III School Chapel by Richard Spender (1921-1943)

Richard Spender was a pupil at King Edward VI School, Stratford-upon-Avon, (Shakespeare's school) and a very fine though little known war poet. He was killed in action in Sedjenane, Tunisia, leading his men against enemy machine gun positions. He lies in the Military Cemetery at Tabarka in the same country. Here is a fragment from one of three poems entitled 'Embarkation Leave' in which he describes a visit to his old school chapel (The Guild Chapel in Chapel Lane, Stratford-upon-Avon—open to the public) when on leave from the horrors of war. The poem was recently read in full at a special service to celebrate the 750th anniversary of the chapel.

The Priest's hand is raised and I bow
Feeling about me powers. 'The blessing of God
Be amongst you and remain with you.'
As I left the faces smiles, singing,
And I knew that I had no fear.
'Lord behold us.' 'Let Thy servant depart in peace.'

Throughout the world,
Amongst my enemies and in strange hills;
Lying dead across the dead leaves of men,
I am in goodly company,
I am amongst friends and in my own house.
'Two or three are gathered together';
'Lord behold us in Thee.'
'Let us now praise famous men,'
They died that we might depart
And remain in His house for ever.

I have no fear for I am in the company of voices,
And the dead leaf is happy, because it has heard
The Spring Wind.

A Prayer for use during the Coronavirus outbreak

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy
in this time of uncertainty and distress.
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may rejoice in your comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Amen.

A Prayer for Remembrance Sunday

God of truth and justice,
we hold before you those whose memory we cherish,
and those whose names we will never know.
Help us to lift our eyes above the torment
of this broken world,
and grant us the grace to pray for those
who wish us harm.
As we honour the past,
may we put our faith in your future;
for you are the source of life and hope,
now and for ever.
Amen.

Contact details for The Reverend Canon Michael Everitt

Address: 15 The College, Durham, DH1 3EQ
Email: michael.everitt@durhamcathedral.co.uk
Telephone: 0191 384 0164

The next issue of *Praying Together*
will be published on Monday 16 November