

Sunday Morning Resources

Sunday 9 November 2025 - The Third Sunday before Advent/Remembrance Sunday

Lectionary Readings (depending on the kind of service you are leading, you may use one or more of the following readings – however, you **must** use the gospel reading, as this is what the homily is based on)

Job 19.23–27a; Psalm 17.1–9 [or 17.1–8]; 2 Thessalonians 2.1–5, 13–end; Luke 20.27–38

Homily

Today's homily has been written by Canon Jan Payne, LLM, 5folds Benefice

"When you go home, tell them of us and say, for your tomorrow, we gave our today." These words, not from Holy Scripture but attributed to John Maxwell Edmonds, are carved on the memorial at the Kohima War Cemetery in India. They honour the soldiers who fought in the Battle of Kohima during World War 2 and will be heard across the UK today, at religious services and as people gather around war memorials to mark this Remembrance Sunday.

Coming together to remember takes up a significant part of November in our church year and the whole month is sometimes referred to as "The Kingdom Season". It starts with All Saints Day on 1st November, then on 2nd November, All Souls when we set aside time to remember those personal to us who have died and we see no more. Remembrance Sunday, which follows, is not a time to glorify war but a time to recall the sacrifice so many made, both abroad and at home in times of conflict. Memories all the more poignant this year, as we have marked VE and VJ Day 80,

Sadly, today, we still see a significant number of disagreements between (and within) nations taking place across the world. Men and women serving in our armed forces continue to die whilst on active service, over 7000 since World War 2 ended eighty years ago. Therefore, today we gather, as generations before us have gathered, to remember those who gave their lives fighting for peace, justice, and freedom. We remember, too, the families who waited, the communities forever changed, the silence that fell where laughter once rang out. As we do so, we continue to pray for peace across the world.

Our reading from the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 20 might not seem, at first, like a natural passage for Remembrance Sunday. It's a debate between Jesus and a group called the Sadducees, about marriage and resurrection. However, at its heart, this story is about what kind of God we believe in—and whether life or death has the final word.

The Sadducees came to Jesus with a trick question. They were a religious and political group in ancient Judaism, primarily composed of the wealthy, priestly hierarchy. They were a conservative group who didn't believe in the resurrection; they believed that when we die,

that's the end. They wanted to find a way to wrong-foot Jesus, so they ask a question that is something of a puzzle. A woman marries seven brothers, each of whom dies. Whose wife will she be in the resurrection? It was a rather unlikely and imaginary situation, a cold, calculating question, seeing people as numbers, devoid of any emotion.

Perhaps, reflecting on this question can help us when we think about Remembrance Sunday. When we speak of war, of those who died, it's all too easy to slip into numbers, statistics, and names carved on stone, whilst forgetting that behind every name there is a story—a son, a husband, a daughter, a friend. Behind every life lost, there was love, laughter, hope, and dreams.

Jesus listened to the Sadducees respectfully. He reminded them that evidence of the truth of resurrection will not be found in earthly society but in their own Jewish history, where God is God of their ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who are alive with Him. To question this teaching would be to deny the Sadducees own beliefs and therefore they are silenced and must find another way to achieve their goal of catching Jesus out and, ultimately, removing him from what he's doing.

What Jesus's questioners also failed to realise was that life to come will be different from this life – life in heaven will be unlike that which we know on earth. Human relationships are largely a matter of place and time on earth. To study this passage and realise that marriage, as we understand it, is not recognised in heaven may be a disappointment and we find it hard to comprehend. Yet what Jesus promises is something far more amazing and wonderful. He teaches that those in heaven are like angels and are children of God.

The poet John Donne wrote something similar around the time of the turn of the 16th/17th centuries:

“Bring us, O Lord God, at our last awakening into the house and gate of heaven, to enter into that gate and dwell in that house, where there shall be no darkness nor dazzling, but one equal light; no noise nor silence, but one equal music; no fears nor hopes, but one equal possession; no ends nor beginnings, but one equal eternity: in the habitations of thy majesty and glory, world without end.”

To God, all are alive, even those we think of as lost, gone, or forgotten—they are not lost to Him, for in His eternal presence, no one slips away into nothingness. Those who fell in battle, those who died far from home, those whose names we do not even know—each one is known and remembered by God so, in our services today, in our own Acts of Remembrance, we echo God's own remembering. We refuse to let death have the final word and we say, as Jesus did, that love endures forever. To remember is not to glorify war, nor conflict. It is to recommit ourselves to the work of peace—to ensure that the sacrifice of those who lost their lives leads us not into bitterness, but into reconciliation.

Resurrection faith means believing that light can still shine in darkness, that forgiveness is stronger than hatred, and that the kingdom of God—where swords are beaten into ploughshares—is not a dream, but a promise.

Therefore, as we move on from this Remembrance Sunday, heading in the direction of Advent and all that will bring, may we carry with us both the weight of remembrance and the light of resurrection. May we honour the dead by living fully, by loving deeply, by working tirelessly for peace, for we believe, with Jesus, that God is not the God of the dead, but of the living—and to Him, all are alive. Amen.

Ways to Engage all Generations

When different generations are gathered together in worship there is an opportunity to build relationships and to encounter God in our conversations as we build relationships and learn from each other no matter what our ages, stage of life or faith and for all present to feel included. Adding some wondering questions to the service at an appropriate moment can help to do this.

Wondering Questions: Some wondering questions that may help to engage all generations to ponder and explore during the talk, service or during the week may include (three or so) of the following style of questions:

- I wonder what your favourite part of the story/passage is? I wonder why that is?
- I wonder who your favourite character is? I wonder why that is?
- I wonder how _____ felt or I wonder how _____ felt when _____ happened?
- I wonder how you feel about _____?
- I wonder where you are in this story?
- I wonder what part of the story is about you?
- I wonder what the [tree, pearl, coin] could really be?
- I wonder why _____ said _____?
- I wonder what we can learn about God in this story?

Suggested intercessions

Let us pray for the Church and for the world, and let us thank God for his goodness.

Lord of all, we give you thanks for the freedom and peace we enjoy today, remembering with gratitude those who gave their lives in war and conflict. We thank you for their courage, their sacrifice, and their steadfast hope that a better world might be born. we pray for all who still bear the scars of conflict: for veterans and their families, for the wounded in body, mind, or spirit. Grant that we may never forget the cost of peace, and that we may live as people worthy of their sacrifice.

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Almighty God, in this time when our world is still torn apart by war and conflict, guide the leaders of the nations and all who hold power and responsibility. Give them wisdom, courage, and a longing for what is just and true. Where hatred divides and vengeance darkens hearts, may your Spirit of reconciliation and mercy prevail. We pray for all

peacemakers—diplomats, aid workers, and soldiers who serve to protect those in troubled areas of the world. Bless them in their calling to build peace upon the earth.

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, we pray for your Church on earth that it may bear witness to that resurrection hope—comforting the sorrowful, challenging injustice, and proclaiming the gospel of peace. May we remember always that you are not the God of the dead, but of the living, and that all who rest in you are held in your everlasting arms. We pray for our own church leaders [*you may care to insert the names of your local ministers here*] and for those charged with the leadership and care of the Diocese of Ely.

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Comforting God, we remember before you all who are in any kind of need at this time, for those struggling to feed their families and pay their bills, for the homeless and for those who are sick in body, mind or spirit. We lift to you those known to us who need to know your healing in their lives and your presence surrounding and upholding them [*if you have permission to do so, you may care to insert local names here*]

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Eternal God, we remember all who have died: [*if you have permission to do so, you may care to insert local names here*] Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon them. Be close to all who mourn the loss of someone they have known and loved and to those who watch and wait with the dying. With them we look for the day when your kingdom shall come and your peace shall reign for ever.

Merciful Father,
**accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

Suggested hymns/songs (*a variety of hymns and songs. Those used more traditionally for Remembrance Sunday are marked **)

Abide with me *
All who are thirsty
Amazing Grace *
Be still and know that I am God
Be still for the presence of the Lord
Cornerstone
Dear Lord and Father of mankind *
Eternal Father strong to save *
Forth in the peace of Christ we go

I vow to thee my country *
Now thank we all our God *
O God our help in ages past *
O Lord my God (How great thou art)
Put peace into each other's hands
The Lord's my shepherd

Activities to accompany the service

If you are looking for resources to accompany the service for engaging younger children, then there are lots of online resources. The following free to access/download resources may be useful starting points:

- <https://flamecreativekids.blogspot.com/>
- <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/MessyChurchBRF/>
- <https://www.faithinkids.org/>
- [reflectionary.org](https://www.reflectionary.org/) – lectionary-based resources
- [engageworship](https://www.engageworship.org/) – in particular 'Area 52' for lectionary-based material
- <https://www.bdeducation.org.uk/product-category/primary-age-5-11/>
(weekly@lectionary resource)