

(32) THIRTYSECOND SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

(NOVEMBER 8<sup>TH</sup>, 2020)

**Readings for Today:** *Wisdom 6:12 – 16; Ps. 63; Thessalonians 4:12 – 18; Matthew 25: 1 – 13.*

Today there will be two words in the minds and on the lips of those of us for whom today is the nation's annual ceremony to honour the dead – the dead of two World Wars and of the many conflicts which have followed them, right up to our own time.

Those two words are *Remembrance* and *Sacrifice*. For some people – those whose grandparents, parents or other relatives died in war – today and next Wednesday, Armistice Day, will have a personal meaning, concentrating thoughts and feelings which are present all the time. But I think that for most people the words *Remembrance* and *Sacrifice* don't rise to the surface except on these public occasions.

How different it is – or at any rate should be – for us Christians. For these two words are at the heart of our worship – the worship from which we are again separated by Government regulation.

For us *Remembrance* and *Sacrifice* are central to our life, because they are central to the Eucharist – the act which our Lord commanded us to continue – *This is my body given for you.*

*This is my blood...which is shed for you. Do this in remembrance of me.*

In every mass – on every Lord's Day and on the countless other occasions when it is celebrated – the Church makes the memorial of the death of the Lord, and offers itself to the Father in union with the sacrifice of Christ, which was sealed by that death.

This constant act of *Remembrance* and *Sacrifice* is the thing by which Christians live. It is the God-given means, not only of our own salvation, but of our work of showing salvation to a world which – at any rate in the un-Churched West – has forgotten both that it needs salvation and that salvation is freely available through the self-giving love of God, revealed in Jesus Christ. Without the Eucharist there would be no living Church – which is why the decision to prevent Christians being present to *Remember* and to offer *Sacrifice* together is such a seriously wrong decision.

But – just as Christmas will happen, whatever limitations governments may put on the festive celebrations – so the *Sacrifice* of Christ and the Church's *Remembrance* of that saving act of love will persist. Our task in this lockdown period is to unite ourselves, in whatever way is made possible by technology, with the offering of the Eucharist throughout the Universal Church

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