



**COLLECT, READINGS & REFLECTION FOR SUNDAY 8 NOVEMBER 2020**  
**Remembrance Sunday**

**Collect**

O God,  
the friend of good order and protector of life,  
in your hands you hold our human hearts  
and the justice of nations,  
and you make us your partners,  
responsible for your world:  
let us not grow weary  
but give us courage and renew our strength,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

**Psalm 23**

- 1 The Lord is my shepherd; ♦  
therefore can I lack nothing.
- 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures ♦  
and leads me beside still waters.
- 3 He shall refresh my soul ♦  
and guide me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
- 4 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.
- 5 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.
- 6 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.

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### **Romans 8.31-39**

31 What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? 32 He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? 33 Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. 35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered." 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

### **John 15.9-17**

9 As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. 10 If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. 11 I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. 12 "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command you. 15 I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. 16 You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. 17 I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

### **Remembrance Sunday Reflection, from Mary-Lou**

One of the very worst parts of 2020 has been living with the everyday realities of enforced separation – separation from dear ones; separation from the operator on the till in the shop; separation from loved ones in hospital and care homes; separation from human touch and comfort. The list goes on and on. As we come to another Remembrance Sunday, now once more in lockdown, I've been thinking of the huge separations faced by previous generations in war time - and those faced now, by the families of the men and women who serve in our armed forces. What resilience, what courage, strength and perseverance was, and is, needed. Fathers, sons, mothers and daughters went away – for weeks, months, even years, and for many, even coming home could not provide healing from their experiences. They were – they are - changed, for ever.

In the aftermath of WW1, King George V called for the two minute silence we share on this day, so that, in his words: 'in perfect stillness, the thoughts of everyone may be concentrated on reverent remembrance ...' A very significant part of that reverent remembrance has always involved gathering together. At the Cenotaph, in churches, at small and great war memorials across this land and beyond its boundaries, people have stood in solemn silence together, a powerful witness to that 'reverent remembrance.'

This year the great majority of us in England are unable to stand together, in yet another separation forced on us by Coronavirus. I think that is why I chose the reading from Romans Chapter 8 for today's worship, as it speaks of separation. Writing almost 2000 years ago to the young and fragile church in Rome that he longed to visit, St Paul gives us a long list of woes that were likely to affect Christians – perhaps this echoes the persecution they were experiencing, perhaps it reflects the opposition and dangers Paul himself faced. Either way, it reminded his readers then, and us now, of times of cataclysmic events and constant threats. How these words must have resonated with all who have been through times of war, in the trenches, on the battlefields, in the air or on the seas, as well as at home, in air raid shelters and amidst the decimation of bombing raids.

And we live right now with a constant sense of threat: the catastrophic threat of drastic climate change and the extinction of life on Earth; threat from those who would visit murderous and barbaric atrocities on innocents in a perverted and wrong understanding of their religion; threat from the unseen danger of a virus. So this year, we remember at home, but we still remember - in sorrow, but also in thankfulness.

And yet, says St Paul, *If God is for us, who is against us?* There is a new life, a new hope, a new security in the love of God in Christ Jesus. And nothing will be able to separate us from that love. I pray that in our reverent remembering today, and in this new period of separation from one another that we have to live through, we can hold on to Paul's assurance of the love that holds us, and will never let us go.

We are probably feeling the separation very keenly, maybe even feeling abandoned by God – the ongoing trauma of this year, or the awful realities of war, may have wrought cracks in our resilience and in our ability to trust that *'neither death, nor life ... nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.'*

But we are the Body of Christ. Not being able to gather together physically does not change that, for we are part of the new creation. In the moments of stillness, in our remembering, trust that others are holding the Christlight for you. As the lovely hymn, *Brother, Sister, let me serve you* says:

*I will hold the Christlight for you  
In the night time of your fear;  
I will hold my hand out to you,  
Speak the peace you long to hear.*

For the Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.