



Readings and Reflection – Remembrance Sunday, 14 November, 2021

COLLECT

Almighty Father,
whose will is to restore all things
in your beloved Son, the King of all:
govern the hearts and minds of those in authority,
and bring the families of the nations,
divided and torn apart by the ravages of sin,
to be subject to his just and gentle rule;
who lives and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Psalm 16

- 1 Preserve me, O God, for in you have I taken refuge; ♦
I have said to the Lord, 'You are my lord, all my good depends on you.'
- 2 All my delight is upon the godly that are in the land, ♦
upon those who are noble in heart.
- 3 Though the idols are legion that many run after, ♦
their drink offerings of blood I will not offer,
neither make mention of their names upon my lips.
- 4 The Lord himself is my portion and my cup; ♦
in your hands alone is my fortune.
- 5 My share has fallen in a fair land; ♦
indeed, I have a goodly heritage.
- 6 I will bless the Lord who has given me counsel, ♦
and in the night watches he instructs my heart.
- 7 I have set the Lord always before me; ♦
he is at my right hand; I shall not fall.
- 8 Wherefore my heart is glad and my spirit rejoices; ♦
my flesh also shall rest secure.
- 9 For you will not abandon my soul to Death, ♦
nor suffer your faithful one to see the Pit.
- 10 You will show me the path of life; in your presence is the fullness of joy ♦
and in your right hand are pleasures for evermore.

Romans 8.31-39

What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? 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? Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 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. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, 'For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.'

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 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.

Matthew 5.1-12

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

'Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

'Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

'Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

'Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

'Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.'

Reflection – this week from Peter

Remembering must necessarily have its roots in the past. We can't remember what hasn't yet happened, after all! But for remembering to be a good thing to do it mustn't get stuck in the past. It has to be an activity that encourages us, directs us in a good way, leads us forward into the future. This is the kind of remembering we find in the Apostle Paul. Writing to the Romans he begins with now: "What then are we to say?" he asks. And then he remembers: "God did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all." And then comes the encouragement – and what a powerful word it is: "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 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." Today's Gospel – the familiar Beatitudes from Matthew – manages to hold past, present and future together all the way through. When Jesus says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven..." we are remembering him teaching the disciples on the mountain – a past event; but we are also hearing him teaching us today; and we are finding encouragement and guidance for what lies ahead.

Today, our remembering is very particularly focused on those who lost their lives in war – and, above all, in the two great world wars of the last century – but also in Vietnam, in Iraq, in the Balkans, in the Falklands, in Afghanistan and everywhere that saw conflict erupt into warfare. Remembering the horror of war doesn't seem enough to stop us falling into the same trap again and again – and that is why it is so important that we hear afresh the words of Jesus: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." War will not go away. Increasingly, the confrontation between soldiers on the battlefield is being replaced by ever more sophisticated technology and by digital warfare. Becoming a peaceful person, an ambassador for peace is of infinite importance if the world is to know that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. May our remembering today renew our desire for peace – peace in our hearts, peace in our homes, peace in our world, peace in creation.