

Today we remember - that is we put back together the elements of the story that tells us who we are.

As Joe Biden did last night, in his speech from Delaware, he puts the elements together that describe our identity, but remembering is complex - it's not straightforward. We have a tendency to be selective to choose the bits of our past - of our story - that give us the meaning we want to find.

But because history is complex, we also need to tell that story with honesty - with realism, with humility, as well as gratitude and wonder.

In the Beatitudes just read to us we hear a vision of a different world: a world that is turned upside down because the values of power are reimagined, reframed, and re-described. It's the power of meekness; the power of loss; the power of poverty of spirit; of mercy; of purity of heart; of peacemakers; that in the end are eternally valued, not those who simply try to accumulate power for now.

They offer a different vision, and it's a vision derived from the Old Testament scriptures, in which justice and mercy - learning from the past, learning from mistakes with honesty and integrity - is what should shape a people as we order our society. And what we learn from that story is that the work of peace is never finished. As Bertolt Brecht in his play 'The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui', concludes by saying - "well okay", and I won't use the particular language he uses, "but okay this particular person of Adolf Hitler is dead, that what fired him is still on heat: it lives on, and we have to be vigilant; the work is never finished". So today we recommit ourselves: not just to praying, or to remembering, but to asking whether we are willing to pay the price of freedom for others, even those others with whom we do not agree.

The Canadian singer-songwriter sums this up: the vision of a united society, not of sameness, but of common commitment, when watching the coffins of dead Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan - at Kandahar airport: he wrote "each one lost is everyone's loss. Each one lost is a vital part of you and me".

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