

## Remembrance

Have you seen the film 'Saving Private Ryan'? The first twenty minutes of the film is a powerful account of war, portraying the first landing crafts arriving at the Normandy beaches on D Day. The film successfully brings to life the events of that day, as a vivid act of remembrance.

From a biblical perspective, the word remembrance means making present a past reality, so that we can benefit from it today. On Remembrance Sunday we think about those who have given their lives in wars over the years, as well as those who continue to grieve over their lost loved ones. We want to make their sacrifice in past conflicts real for us today, so that we can engage with the horror of war and those enduring suffering today.

It involves dealing with the why question in the face of relentless tragedies and injustices: why does God allow such suffering to take place? One of the great themes of the Scriptures is that God identifies with the suffering. But the Christian faith goes beyond this! It affirms that in Jesus, God's son, divinity became involved in suffering and death on the cross. It is at Calvary that we see how God himself knows what it is to lose a loved one in an unprovoked attack. 'I could never myself believe in God if it were not for the Cross. In the real world of pain, how could one worship a God who was immune to it?' (John Stott).

Although we don't fully understand the reason why God allows evil and suffering to continue, we do know what the reason isn't! It can't be that he doesn't love us! God so loved us and hates suffering that he was willing to come down and get involved in our hurting world. This can be a source of real strength on such an occasion.

However, how can we ensure that those who have given their lives are truly honoured, not forgetting those who are risking their lives in conflicts today? An appropriate response is to actively work and pray for justice in our world, especially where there is inequality and conflict. In a divided world we are also called to renew our efforts to work for peace. We need to be serious about being peacemakers, especially where it involves those close to us. As Jesus said, 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God' (Matt 5:9).

Parish Pump