Readings for Remembrance Sunday

8th November 2026

First Reading: Job 19:21-27a

Have pity on me, have pity on me, O you my friends,
for the hand of God has touched me!
Why do you, like God, pursue me,
never satisfied with my flesh?
"O that my words were written down!
O that they were inscribed in a book!
O that with an iron pen and with lead
they were engraved on a rock forever!
For I know that my Redeemer lives,
and that at the last he will stand upon the earth;
and after my skin has been thus destroyed,
then in my flesh I shall see God,
whom I shall see on my side,
and my eyes shall behold, and not another.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 15:51-57

Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled: "Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Gospel: St John 15:8-13

Jesus said, 'My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. 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. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.'

A Reflection for Remembrance Sunday

From my earliest memories as a young child, I was taken each year to the Remembrance Sunday parade at the war memorial in the town where we lived. It was quite simply what almost everyone did. In those days, there were many people of my parents' generation with vivid memories of the second world war, and still quite a few of my grandparents' generation who remembered the first world war. Remembering those who had given their lives was important.

In our family, we had an extra ritual when we got home from the Remembrance Sunday parade: we placed our poppies around the photo of young man, hanging in our hall, who looked remarkably like my Dad. But it wasn't my Dad. It was my grandfather's younger brother, Chris. Chris was just 18 when the first world war began and he joined up almost immediately to serve his country. With so many others, he went through the hell of the trenches and, at the age of 21, he was killed in action at the battle of Passchendaele in August 1917. So many died; there was no fanfare at Chris's passing, nor even a funeral or a grave, because his body disappeared into the mud of no-man's land in Flanders before it could be recovered, but he was quietly remembered by his family down the years, even after all those who had known him had also passed away.

My great uncle was a brave man. I know that because, in 1916, he was awarded the Military Cross for conspicuous gallantry. But he was also very human. After my parents died, we found Chris's letters to his parents from the trenches, carefully kept after his death by his parents, then his brother, then his nephew my Dad, and now my sister, his great niece. They make fascinating reading, but they clearly reveal the human cost of war, and one comment in particular has stayed with me. Not long before Chris died, his brother, my grandfather Leonard, who was also serving in the trenches of Flanders, was injured and 'got a Blighty' – he was sent home to Britain to recover. In one of Chris's last letters home, his simple comment was 'Lenny is so lucky'. It is a dreadful irony that, in those circumstances, to be injured was the height of good fortune.

My family story is far from unique. I am convinced that a similar story could be told in almost every family up and down this land, though not all families have been hoarders like mine and the stories may be less well-known now. But today, whether or not their stories are known, we remember and honour the service and sacrifice of all those military personnel, veterans, and civilians who have died in wars and conflicts; ordinary people of exceptional courage and very human fears.

Of course, we know that the human race has not learnt the lessons of history, and that war continues across the world, sometimes a justified and proportionate response to aggression and oppression, and sometimes not. And new generations of young men and women step up to serve their country.

When I was in my late teens, several of my friends joined the military when they left school or university. One of them, a lad a couple of years older than me, joined the Royal Navy. Sadly he died in a diving accident during training but, had he lived, a month later he would have been sailing to the South Atlantic as part of the Falklands Task Force.

Later I became a teacher. Some of the youngsters I taught also joined the military when they left school, serving in new theatres of conflict: Iraq, Afghanistan… Some of them returned to the school to speak about their experiences. They also showed remarkable courage and were a credit to the Services. I vividly remember a young lass who was a paramedic describing how her armoured vehicle drove over an IED – an improvised explosive device – in Afghanistan

as she went to help someone who had been injured. Remarkably, she came out unscathed, but others were not so fortunate. It always struck me as so appropriate that her name was Hope.

War has touched, and continues to touch, all our lives. For some it comes much closer to home than for others. The International Red Cross estimates that there are about 130 armed conflicts going on in the world today. A few of them are familiar; we hear of them in our news feeds almost daily. Others we have barely heard of, and many we have never heard of, yet in all of them ordinary people like us are caught up, and ordinary people stand up to aggression, injustice and hate with extraordinary courage.

'Lest we forget' is a phrase often associated with Remembrance Sunday. War is an ongoing tragedy of the world, and it may sometimes seem that we have forgotten, yet it is so important that we don't forget. So we come to Remembrance events to honour and remember those who gave their lives in past conflicts, those who were injured, those who were bereaved. We come to honour and give thanks for the men and women who serve on the front line today. We come to show our solidarity with those whose lives are currently being torn apart by conflict.

In the reading we heard from John's Gospel, Jesus gives a new commandment to all his followers: 'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you', which he follows with those words, more familiarly rendered as: 'Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends'. In his life, Jesus demonstrated a love for people that was unconditional, patient, kind, and never failed and, of course, Jesus himself went on to lay down his life on the Cross for his friends – for all people. And he calls us to do the same: 'Love one another as I have loved you', he said.

Today we remember those who have literally laid down their lives in conflict. We also honour those who are laying down their lives today in a different way, by serving their country and the world. But the commandment is not just for those on the front line, and Remembrance is not just for today, it is for all of us and for every day of the year. We lay down our lives for our friends by serving others; by living lives that consider the needs of our neighbours near and far, that put their needs before our greed; by working for a fairer sharing of the earth's resources; by working to build harmony and understanding in our communities, and between peoples of different backgrounds; by not seeking to blame other groups of people for the ills of society, but by taking our share of responsibility and working with others to resolve difficulties.

'Lest we forget': we honour the memory of those who have gone before and those who serve today by the way we live our lives, not just today but all year round.