



HOMILY by Father Robbie Low

32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time-Year B-November 11th- 2018-

Padstow/Wadebridge/Bodmin/Tintagel

Remembrance Sunday Centenary

***Readings: 1 Kings 17:10-16, Psalm 145, Hebrews 9: 24-28,
Mark 12:38-44***

This is the day when we, as a nation, stop.... and remember.

It is one hundred years since the guns fell silent.

It is one hundred years since the church bells rang out across the land to celebrate the end of the Great War.

The last few telegrams filtered through days later to the newly bereaved who had so recently celebrated salvation.

The flower of European manhood, along with our Imperial allies, lay slaughtered from the mud entombed in the killing fields of France and Belgium to the blood-stained waters of Suvla Bay.

It was as if a continent had tried to commit suicide. Things would never be the same again. The old order had vanished and with it much of the fabric of the nation. This was, the survivors declared, the War to end all wars – a hope that lasted only twenty years.

The history of this day has been mixed. Solemnly celebrated for much of the century, the names on the village memorials, cataloguing a community's unbearable loss, honoured. Then a brief period of cultural

iconoclasm – a rejection of these ceremonies as ‘militaristic’ and ‘glorifying war’.

Today we have moved back to solemnity and honour with an elaboration of ceremonial and national consciousness almost beyond imagining.

So, we remember. The truth is that almost none of us can ‘remember’ in the normal sense of the word – to recall what we have seen and known.

Thanks be to God most of us have never known war, never mind total war. There have been wars, to be sure, involving our troops, from the defence against the Marxist killing machine on the Korean peninsula to the miracle of the South Atlantic to the more recent sorties into the hornet’s nest of the Middle East.

But we have not known, for more than my lifetime, for more than a Biblical span, a war that threatens our borders, reigns nightly terror on our cities or would subjugate us to a malign foreign power.

We are the children of the long peace and we are grateful.

For us this remembrance is a reminder of our incredible fortune and a call to honour the sacrifice.

As Catholics we regularly remember the dead in our prayers because remembrance is at the heart of the Mass. But this remembrance is more than a simple recall, reflecting on or even stirring the emotions. The true meaning of Remembrance in Catholic liturgy (as in our Jewish roots) is the intersection of time and eternity – the place where the past becomes truly present and both are an indivisible part of eternity. The Jew celebrates the Passover in the company of his forebears. The Catholic kneels before the altar of the Calvary as the Sacrifice of Christ is re-presented. We re-member – we are joined together - we are in solidarity. Thus, in Christ the Risen One, we are united and able to pray for one another.

Nor do we just stand and admire Christ’s selfless suffering and move on. We participate in it by our receiving of His Body and Blood and commit ourselves to work for His Kingdom of Righteousness and Peace.

Today, millions of poppies will be worn, scattered, planted, illuminated, laid throughout the kingdom. Remembrance will be made. If tomorrow the very values for which so many died are forgotten, it will all have been no more than a piece of theatre, an emotional self-indulgence.

A few years ago, a British Prime Minister invented a thing he called, 'British Values'. It turned out to be a thin secular gruel bearing no relation to the history of this land or its historic Faith. If we are to honour the Fallen then we are inextricably committed to the love of God, the dignity of Man and the sanctity of life against whatsoever emergent wickedness. If we are to honour Christ, we will leave each Mass, fortified by His Presence and determined to glorify God in our lives, rededicated to the mission and ministry of Christ's Church and the salvation of the world.