

SUNDAY PLUS



Remember and do not forget

A Year of the Word



Waiting for action

by Sr Janet Fearn FMDM



“When you’re training, they talk about the honour of defending your country but, when you’re out there on the front line, real guns and real bullets are aimed at you. You feel scared.”

Today’s Gospel speaks of the bridesmaids waiting for the bridegroom, some of them prepared and others ill-prepared for his arrival.

We also remember those who waited in warfare for violence which

might or might not happen; who fearfully faced things for which no amount of classroom teaching could have made them ready.

Waiting is active. We try to fill the gaps. Those who are on the frontline in battle were and are no different whether or not they returned to their families at the end of the wars in which they took part. Wilfred Owen and Rupert Brooke wrote poetry in the trenches. Others created works of

art from scraps of wood and metal which they found lying around the battle field. Most wrote letters to their loved ones and cherished the news from home – and still do.

My father and some of his fellow Commandos marched five miles beyond enemy lines somewhere in Malaya, fully armed and ready to defend themselves against any Japanese patrol which, contrary to reports, might still be in the area. They attended Mass on Christmas

Eve in a nearby village and then marched back to camp.

Today, Remembrance Sunday, we gratefully remember all those who fought and died on our behalf in scenes of conflict that, hopefully, few of us today expect to meet first-hand.

We also remember those who waited and attempted to make the best use of their time.

Sr Janet Fearn is a Franciscan Missionary of the Divine Motherhood.

They shall not grow old

by Liam Waldron

The act of remembering those who are no longer with us is very much associated with this time of the year. We reminisce about and pray for those who have gone before us. While we grieve for those we have lost through bereavement, many of us also lament the loss of those who are still with us, but who have lost their own memories as a result of dementia. The phrase “remember who I am when I forget who you are”, challenges us to be mindful of the personhood of our brothers and sisters who no longer recognise us.

It is said that grief is the price we pay for love, but we can take comfort from the words of St Paul to the Thessalonians which encourage us to grieve not “as others do who have no

hope”, but rather as people who truly believe that we are all alive in the memory of God.

Dr Liam Waldron and Cristina Gangemi co-authored *Intellectual Disability: caring for yourself and others*, available from Redemptorist Publications: www.rpbooks.co.uk

“Remembrance is what makes a people strong, because it feels rooted in a journey, rooted in a history, rooted in a people. Remembrance helps us understand that we are not alone, we are a people: a people with a history, with a past, with a life.”

Pope Francis

We shall always remember them

by Mary Bell

Around the small village of Bucquoy in northern France can be found three Commonwealth War Graves cemeteries. A reading of the headstones reveals that nearly all the soldiers died in August 1918 during the Battle of Arras, only three months before the armistice that ended the First World War.

Most of the fallen were young men in their late teens or early twenties. Carved into the gravestones are their names, ages, dates of death and regiments. Most poignantly, every now and again, the tablet reads: “A soldier of the Great War. Known unto God”.

The gently undulating countryside surrounding the village gives the lie to the evidence

of slaughter revealed by the graves.

In one of these cemeteries lies my great-uncle William, a young man who volunteered at the age of seventeen. He died among his comrades of the Manchester Regiment on 23 August 1918, aged nineteen. Rest in Peace.

We shall always remember them.

Mary Bell is a retired teacher, U3A lecturer and devoted grandmother.

Living Lord, today we remember unforgettable people who died so that we can live, laugh and love today. Reward them, Lord, with the peace and joy which is yours to give, joy that is truly heavenly. ☩ Amen.

Today:
Wisdom 6:12-16
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
Matthew 25:1-13

Monday:
Ezekiel 47:1-2, 8-9, 12
1 Corinthians 3:9-11, 16-17
John 2:13-22

Tuesday:
Titus 2:1-8, 11-14
Luke 17:7-10

Wednesday:
Titus 3:1-7
Luke 17:11-19

Thursday:
Philemon 7-20
Luke 17:20-25

Friday:
2 John 4-9
Luke 17:26-37

Saturday:
3 John 5-8
Luke 18:1-8

Next Sunday:
Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31
1 Thessalonians 5:1-6
Matthew 25:14-30