

## Thought for the Day, Remembrance Sunday, 8 November 2020

During the month of November, the church enters what is known as the 'Kingdom season' – the time between All Saints' Day and Advent – the formal start of the new liturgical year. It is a season rich in commemoration, remembrance and reflection. We have celebrated All Saints' Day, which this year fell on a Sunday; and this was immediately followed by the commemoration of the faithful departed, or All Souls' Day (2 November), when we remembered with thanksgiving those we have known but no longer see, including perhaps those who gave us life, or those who taught us the Christian faith. Remembrance Sunday continues this theme of memory though a time of corporate thanksgiving for those who have sacrificed their lives for others, especially in the wars of the last century. We are reminded that on this day that 'we confront issues of war and peace, loss and self-gift, memory and forgetting.'<sup>1</sup>

In 2020, the month of November will, inevitably, be a special time for reflection and introspection as we approach the end of a year of tragedy and trauma, a year dominated by the global pandemic which has produced world-wide distress, pain, mourning and economic collapse. There has been no year like 2020 in living memory. It is therefore right and proper that, on Remembrance Sunday, we should mark not only the sacrifices of service men and women who have given their lives, but also the NHS workers, the 'frontline' staff, including those who have died from this terrible disease. This is a theme brought home to us, in sharp focus, by the need for a new national 'lockdown', a period that will take us through the Kingdom season into the early days of Advent. To add to the sombre mood, our Archbishops and the Bishop of London have invited Christians to mark the lockdown days by fasting (if we are able to do so safely) and by offering prayers for the nation, its leaders, the NHS and other vital services, and all who are suffering. We should make special efforts to do this each Thursday in November.

All this may strike a gloomy note, for we are entering a time of restraint and anxiety, a period when we cannot see a clear end to the crisis. But, as Christians, we must nonetheless approach the coming weeks with the sure knowledge that there is indeed light at the end of the tunnel. We are nearing the season of Advent, a time of expectation and preparation, a time of watching and waiting, as we get ready to celebrate the event that changed the world: the birth of Jesus Christ.

Thus, during November, we must journey on, laying aside gloom and depression, towards Advent, that encouraging season of mystery and expectation – a time when we may indeed glimpse an inextinguishable light in the darkness: the sure incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Peter Clough

---

<sup>1</sup> Common Worship, *Times and Seasons*, p.537.