

# In remembrance



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## Remembrance Sunday

by Georgina Byrne

Over one hundred years ago Europe was embroiled in war. There was nothing new or surprising about that. Wars had raged across Europe and the world long before the Great War of 1914-1918. The magnitude of loss during the First World War, however, the tragedy of lives cut short, the devastation of human bodies meeting modern war machinery, have all served to keep that particular war alive in popular imagination.

The sort of remembrance we are familiar with today was born from a hastily concocted plan to mark

11 November 1919, a year after the armistice. The two-minute silence held on that first anniversary was suggested by Sir Percy Fitzpatrick, who had encountered it in South Africa, and enthusiastically supported by King George V.

No one living can remember the First World War, yet the liturgy of Remembrance still offers an opportunity for reflection and penitence for human failure and cruelty. In the tragedy of war, we recognise what Paul calls the "thrones or dominions or rulers or powers" (Colossians 1:16), which stand in stark contrast to Christ the Prince of Peace. ☺

**“The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the decrees of the Lord are sure, making wise the simple.”**

Psalm 19:7

Julia McGuinness *reflects on* 1 Thessalonians 4:13-end

**O**n Remembrance Sunday we grieve lives lost in war. In today's reading from Thessalonians, Paul writes to Christians grieving the loss of their companions in the spiritual battle. The church in Thessalonica was a persecuted minority in this large and wealthy sea port.

These Christians are anxious that believers who have died will be left out at Christ's promised return, an event they eagerly anticipate as imminent. Paul reassures them that their loved ones are even now in God's care. They will share fully the resurrection life and destiny heralded by the second coming alongside Christians who are still alive when it happens.

Paul turns to picture language to present the certain hope of Christ's return alongside the mystery of what this ultimate, transformative intervention of God in human history will look like. Rather than speculate on the detail, we receive Paul's words best as the comfort he intends. Amid the sorrows of this present life, we are assured that one day all that now separates us from the immediate presence of Christ and of one another, will be removed, and we will be gloriously brought together for ever.

When a loved one dies, our hearts may turn to remembering the past, our minds to practical questions in the present, and our spirits to desolate thoughts of a separated future. Paul offers encouragement and hope. It is a message of hope for us, centuries later, in our own fragmented and fragile world. ☺

**Lord, thank you that your Spirit brings hope in our sorrows. May we encourage others to trust their lives to your loving lordship; that we might rejoice with them together in the hope of your coming kingdom. Amen.**

## The Bible through the week

by Richard Greatrex

*Continuing our look at the Bible readings for the coming week, from Monday to Saturday.*

We are approaching Advent, where judgement and Christ's second coming are major themes. Preparing for Christ's birth and final return are wrapped up together and this week's readings from Titus (1:1-9; 2:1-8. 11-14; 3:1-7), Philemon (7-20) and the Johannine letters (2 John 4-9; 3 John 5-8), offer timely guidance.

In the coming week's readings from Luke 17, Jesus is on the

road to Jerusalem, where he will be judged by the earthly powers and where, through the cross, he will judge and redeem creation.

The readings from Wisdom shift from judgement of the judges, our worldly rulers, through the power of God's just wisdom in the world, to her gracious capacity for delivering God's people from oppression.

The Gospel readings close on Saturday (Luke 18:1-8) with a reminder that if persistence in petitioning an unjust judge pays dividends, then continual prayer to our loving God is a vital task for a true disciple. ☺