



26th April 2020

Welcome to our Eastertime ANZAC service

The bugle sounds its plaintive call
the close of day for those who fall,
as sacrifice for human greed
wrapped up in the politics of our need
to feel important, to control and be
that which we rightly owe to thee.

But each life is given with expectant breath
to enrich our common sense of rest
in peace and love and mutual care
that we may prosper in the share
of the realm of this wide earth
as our God has blessed for us to do.

Come let us then a tribute bring
to those who in the service of their king
gave of life that others may sing
joyful songs of praise.

As pilgrims who are journeying
toward the fuller understanding

of what the Nazarene redeemed
by his eternal love and grace.

And to sow the seeds of living space
given for us to follow and prepare
to reap the harvest of that loving care. *(BLS)*

Lighting our candle of memory



*They shall grow not old, as
we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them,
nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the
sun and in the morning,
We will remember them.*

Hymn 'Honour the dead'

1. Honour the dead,
our country's fighting brave.
honour our children
left in foreign grave,
where poppies grow
and sorrow seeds her flowers,
honour the crosses
marked forever ours.

2. Weep for the places
ravaged with our blood,
weep for the young bones
buried in the mud,
weep for the powers
of violence and greed,
weep for the deals done
in the name of need.

3. Honour the brave
whose conscience was their call,
answered no bugle,
went against the wall,

(Hios 61) *(Shirley Murray)*

suffered in prisons
of contempt and shame,
branded as cowards, in our country's
name

4. Weep for the waste
of all that might have been,
weep for the cost
that war has made obscene,
weep for the homes
that ache with human pain,
weep that we ever
sanction war again.

5. Honour the dream
for which our nation bled,
held now in trust to justify the dead,
honour their vision
on this solemn day:
peace known in freedom,
peace the only way.

Opening Prayer

Lord, God of all existence, who wanders through time and space,
who holds the stars of heaven in the palm of your hands,
the one whom people call 'The Almighty',
we are sick of death!

We are tired of bad news. Endless columns of statistics
telling us of so many deaths and countless infections.

Our mind struggle to comprehend the numbers as we look at the wider world,
Europe, America, China, Africa and Asia.

Some of whom we considered 'advanced', well equipped and safe.
And yet....

We feel helpless at these events; we are in a war, a world war,
that will affect us in so many ways familiar to our grandparents.
We come, as they did, to worship and place our trust in you.
To reaffirm the truth that we began with – that you are God!

But there is nothing that can destroy or contain your life, O God,
life is always finding its way into the cracks of the world and of our lives,

always sending out its shoots and scattering its seeds,
giving birth to new promises and possibilities, resurrecting hope.

We need eyes and ears, hearts and minds
that are attuned to the signs and songs of life
that respond automatically to life's rhythms and reasons.

Teach us, O God, to respond to the life that flows in tears of joy
and that stumbles through tears of grief.

Teach, O God, to respond to the life
that resists even the harshest violence
and the most cataclysmic disaster,
and that slowly rises from ashes of destruction and war.

Teach us, O God, to respond to the life
that dances in the untamed places of the planet,
and that walks gently in cities and technology.

Teach us, O God, to respond to the life
that sings in the cry of the infant,
and that whispers in the sigh of the dying.

Life – your life – is always finding its way through the cracks of the world
and of our lives, O God,

We need only to recognise it and respond, and in this moment,
insofar as we are able, we do. Amen

The Lord's Prayer is sung

Gospel reading Luke 24:13-35

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things

took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him." Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Reflections "The freedom to sacrifice"

TXT vs. "...and you will be witnesses for me in Jerusalem, in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8

1. A common dictum goes something like: "Life is a continuous journey – not a final destination". For me this is true of the scriptural narrative related by the "New Testament". Throughout this period of Lent followed by Holy week, Good Friday and now the season of Eastertide, we have focussed on the journey of the disciples with Jesus. Today we read the story of the 'journey to Emmaus'. Two of the disciples were journeying away from the events at Jerusalem and commiserating as broken and defeated people. They had hoped (along with many others present at the Palm Sunday procession) that this was it! This was the day of the Lord, where the fortunes of Israel would dramatically change. Jesus met them on this journey, taught and healed

them and equipped them to go back to Jerusalem and see life through new eyes. At this stage Galilee must have felt extremely far away!

2. History, then, is also a journey. This is true for many who have served and those who have waited at home for their return. Gallipoli probably felt rather far from an ANZAC point of view! But these journeys of life are not just physical but metaphorical parables of our journeys of growth, insight and understanding - sometimes through suffering and loss. Many a mother has said goodbye to her children only to notice how they returned as men and women.

3. Today is thus not the destination, just as the events of Jerusalem, the Cross, the Tomb, the Ascension and Pentecost, were but milestones and transition points along the way. So too COVID-19, in many respects a 'world at war', also has something to teach us not just personally but socially as well.

4. One of my longstanding 'gripes' with Remembrance Day services is the subtle way 'triumphalism' seems to creep in. This is a sensitive subject, but the subliminal message given by parade's, medals, displays of military might and so forth seem to convey an ongoing sense that we were on 'the right side'. People who have been at the sharp end, in all conflicts, often struggle with memories and sadness's at the causes, the values and politics involved in the loss of their comrades. Second guessing themselves and dealing with a host of interior feelings. The tendency to pick 'hero's and recount stirring tales of bravery does us no favours and tends to procreate values of rugged individualism of the 'John Wayne' type! What values (which the journeys of our lives are teaching us) are we passing on?

5. However, a few years ago I came across the amazing story of Desmond Doss. He was a United States Army corporal who served as a combat medic with an infantry company in World War II. He was twice awarded the Bronze Star Medal for actions in Guam and the Philippines. Doss further distinguished himself in the Battle of Okinawa by saving 75 men, becoming the only conscientious objector to receive the Medal of Honour for his actions during the war. His life has been the subject of books, the documentary *The Conscientious Objector*, and the 2016 film *Hacksaw Ridge* (It is worthwhile seeing it but a warning: there is a lot of Hollywood in it!)

6. A deeply religious man (Raised as an Adventist) he felt constrained by the commandment "thou shalt not kill" yet he still felt convicted to serve his community and society in which God had placed him. He enrolled as a medic and despite the persecution and distain his stance caused, he resisted all attempts to force him to carry any weapon. He completed all other physical

training (and then some!), despite his officers attempts to expel him from their units.

7. However, he earned their respect by his tireless efforts to aid the wounded (even on occasion, the 'enemy') taking them to safety and the first aid stations. The battle of Okinawa, where he worked alone and tirelessly on the battlefield all night, was characterised by his zeal to save even those considered beyond medical hope. He is recorded as having constantly asked God "just one more Lord". He carrying or dragged them to the edge of the Maeda escarpment and lowered them to others at the bottom to be taken away to the Field hospital. The story includes how his comrades attitude turned from contempt to respect and praise. [There is much to say about the story of this man but space and time are finite – please see the citation signed by President Truman at the end of the service.]

8. The clear point I wish to make is that there are positive role models in the journey of history, even in seemingly negative contexts. COVID-19 has killed hundreds of health workers and Doctors (in Italy alone more than 60 doctors have perished so far). They are the real heroes of the story. These are people who could have played it safe (some have come out from retirement to volunteer!) but the imperative of God's love drove them to serve. Society may well have forgotten some of the values we learnt after the war but let us not forget the journey we have travelled and the presence of God even in the battlefields of life.

9. Just as the two disciples became re-aware of Jesus, realizing that he had been there all the time and that, in tune with his spirit, they could re-engage and reinterpret their life's journey, so too we must see our journey as a walk to (and through) the Emmaus's of our lives.

A time of response - We choose life

There are many doorways to cynicism, Jesus,
many reasons for despair, many causes for fear;
but there is no excuse for giving them ultimate power;
not if we really believe what we claim to believe.

So we choose not to give in to fear:

Even when we are threatened by violence and abuse,

we choose to believe in the power of love.

We choose not to be led by despair:

Even when dreams fail and the world seems to grow colder and more broken,

we choose to believe in the power of hope.

We choose not to be blinded by cynicism:

Even when joy and celebration feel naïve and frivolous,

we choose to believe in the power of faith.

We choose not to be over-awed by death:

Even when grief shuts out all other voices,

we choose to believe in the power of life.

In every time, in each place, with all people,

may your resurrection rise up within us,

and lead us to new, creative, healing choices. Amen.

(John v/d Laar, Sacredise)

We pray for others

(Meriel and Murray Hofmeyr)

God of love, peace and freedom, as we worship in the quietness of our homes today, we are reminded of, and give thanks for, the peace and freedom we enjoy, won for us by the sacrifice and courage of those who believed in these ideals and were prepared to stand up for them. We commemorate and honour all New Zealanders and allied troops killed in conflict, whether in combat or working in support roles. We pay tribute to the servicemen and women who now live with the emotional and physical scars of war.

We think now of the sacrifices being made for a new cause. That of doctors, nurses and health workers worldwide who tend the sick, exposing themselves to the danger of Corona virus. We are deeply indebted to them for their commitment and ask that there will sufficient protection and safety measures taken for them.

Indeed, we bring the turmoil of the world to you Lord. Daily we hear of new complications compounding the turbulence in which we find ourselves, each having an impact on another. Have mercy on us.

We think of those grieving the loss of a family member, often without the chance to say 'goodbye'. We are mindful of millions out of employment, unable to feed their families or pay for accommodation.

Our hearts go out to those in countries where there is already famine, poverty and war, now having to face added danger of the virus.

May these people be aware that you walk alongside them sharing in their grief, distress, and extreme hardship.

Lord we bring before you world leaders, asking that they will be endowed with wisdom beyond their own as they steer a way through the catastrophe caused by the pandemic. May they have the will and courage to resist all

influences and pressures that would lead them away from working for the good of their countries and the world.

We pray for our own leaders here in New Zealand as they consider ways to stimulate the economy and ask that the long term health benefits for all of us of a cleaner environment feature in their planning.

We pray that those who are able, will find ways to reach out to the lonely, bring cheer and encouragement to the fearful, and join in contributing to the spirit of togetherness which has grown in our communities. We give thanks for time to reflect, connect with our family and friends, and pray that as we emerge from the pandemic, we'll bring with us a new set of values.

These prayers we ask in the name of Jesus. Amen

Hymn 'God marks no ending, only new beginnings'

(Andrew Pratt)

God marks no ending,
only new beginnings,
until the consummation of our lives;
God keeps no count of losses,
nor of winnings:
we move through grace,
the Holy Spirit thrives.

So as we go beyond this time,
this setting,
rememb'ring all the laughter
and the tears;

we go with God in faith,
so not regretting
the moments shared, the hopes, the
dreams, the fears.

Though parted for a while,
we travel onward,
not knowing what the future
has in store.

This phase will close, the spirit draws us
forward,
we've tasted love, but God has
promised more!

(Poppies and Snowdrops)

Words of Blessing

Fall in love with living
wrestling with the chaos and the pain
within ourselves and within the world.
Join the celebration of life,
dancing with the angels and the clowns.
And may the God of peace and joy,
Who is continually making all things new,
Embrace you as a partner
In the divine creating.

Amen! May it be so!

(Joyce Boyce-Tillman, A World of Blessing. Benedictions from Every Continent and Many Cultures)

Citation: Private First Class Desmond T. Doss, United States Army, Medical Detachment, 307th Infantry, 77th Infantry Division. Near Urasoe-Mura, Okinawa, Ryukyu Islands, 29 April – 21 May 1945. He was a company aid man when the 1st Battalion assaulted a jagged escarpment 400 feet high. As our troops gained the summit, a heavy concentration of artillery, mortar and machinegun fire crashed into them, inflicting approximately 75 casualties and driving the others back. Private First Class Doss refused to seek cover and remained in the fire-swept area with the many stricken, carrying them one by one to the edge of the escarpment and there lowering them on a rope-supported litter down the face of a cliff to friendly hands. On 2 May, he exposed himself to heavy rifle and mortar fire in rescuing a wounded man 200 yards forward of the lines on the same escarpment; and two days later he treated four men who had been cut down while assaulting a strongly defended cave, advancing through a shower of grenades to within eight yards of enemy forces in a cave's mouth, where he dressed his comrades' wounds before making four separate trips under fire to evacuate them to safety. On 5 May, he unhesitatingly braved enemy shelling and small arms fire to assist an artillery officer. He applied bandages, moved his patient to a spot that offered protection from small-arms fire and, while artillery and mortar shells fell close by, painstakingly administered plasma. Later that day, when an American was severely wounded by fire from a cave, Private First Class Doss crawled to him where he had fallen 25 feet from the enemy position, rendered aid, and carried him 100 yards to safety while continually exposed to enemy fire. On 21 May, in a night attack on high ground near Shuri, he remained in exposed territory while the rest of his company took cover, fearlessly risking the chance that he would be mistaken for an infiltrating Japanese and giving aid to the injured until he was himself seriously wounded in the legs by the explosion of a grenade. Rather than call another aid man from cover, he cared for his own injuries and waited five hours before litter bearers reached him and started carrying him to cover. The trio was caught in an enemy tank attack and Private First Class Doss, seeing a more critically wounded man nearby, crawled off the litter and directed the bearers to give their first attention to the other man. Awaiting the litter bearers' return, he was again struck, this time suffering a compound fracture of one arm. With magnificent fortitude he bound a rifle stock to his shattered arm as a splint and then crawled 300 yards over rough terrain to the aid station. Through his outstanding bravery and unflinching determination in the face of desperately dangerous conditions Private First Class Doss saved the lives of many soldiers. His name became a symbol throughout the 77th Infantry Division for outstanding gallantry far above and beyond the call of duty.