

CLERGY LETTER

Dear Friends

I am sure that it won't have passed your notice that there is a very important anniversary this month. Sunday 11th November marks 100 years since the armistice that saw an end to the fighting in World War one. Over the past 4 ¼ years we have been remembering the centenaries of many very sad and sobering battles and occasions that took place since Britain went to war with Germany on 4 August 1914. Each one reminding us of the horrors and futility of this horrendous time in human history.

However, this month we move on to far happier memories as we celebrate the end of the fighting and think about how people would have felt knowing that they could, at last, look forward to a peaceful future. We can imagine the feelings of elation that were shared by the whole nation as folk looked forward to their young men coming home for good and all were able to focus their efforts on building a secure and stable society for everyone. The end of this "war to end all wars" probably gave rise to a "celebration to end all celebrations" – and quite rightly so.

I believe that it is also quite right that today, 100 years later, we too should take the opportunity to celebrate this event in history. We too should remember the feelings of gratitude, joy



and hope that were shared by the rest of the nation at the time. Indeed I don't think we should simply remember them, I believe that we should also echo them...with interest. After all, we are fortunate enough to live in a time and place that has greatly benefitted from the sacrifices that were made by

others in the past and we now live lives that our great grandparents couldn't even have dreamed about. We are fortunate enough to live in a part of the world that isn't just peaceful but beautiful and affluent as well. We have the support of some of the best emergency and health services in the world when we are in trouble, we are able to rely on clean running water, power and forms of communication. Our shops are always well stocked, the streets are clean and well managed and we have access to forms of transport and leisure activities that our forebears couldn't even have dreamed about.

But sadly, as we all know, this isn't the case for every country. Indeed, I am sure that we are all very much aware of the fact that over the past 100 years there has barely been a single day when there hasn't been some form of conflict somewhere in the world. Each one, no matter how brief has not only affected many innocent people at the time but also for years into the future.

During his sermon on the Mount Jesus said – Blessed are the Peacemakers for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven. Although he always acknowledged that sometimes it is necessary to stand up for what is right and that we should always be prepared to do our bit to help and protect the more vulnerable and those in need, he made it clear that the path of Peace was always the right path. Of course, this doesn't simply apply to great national and international situations, it also applies to what goes on in our own lives or homes.

Yes, there will always be times when we might get upset by the actions of others – there are also likely to be times when we upset them. But letting these issues develop into disharmony and conflict is



never going to be the right way forward. Instead we should also be willing to come together, to accept our differences and apologise for any hurts that we may have caused and then work together to build a happy and harmonious future that benefits all.

Jesus said to his disciples "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid". That peace certainly helped them as they faced many challenges 2000 years ago. That peace is also offered to us today and I pray that each one of us will accept it, appreciate it and learn to let it grow in our lives.

With Blessings for a peaceful November.

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