



Proper 33, Year A - November 13, 2011
Remembrance Sunday

A Homily preached by the Rev'd Tara Livingston

On November 11th each and every year all of Canada comes to a stop. Some of us gather together and some of us take a moment in the privacy of our homes but at 11.00 on that day Canadians from coast to coast just take a moment to remember. We take a moment to remember something that we ourselves have no direct contact with, have no association with, but it is, war is, in our collective memories and we mustn't forget.

As I watched the veterans gathered together this past Friday it was as if their faces were a roadmap to their past. I am now, and am always, grateful that they carry the memories of the horrors of war because I hope that I will never have to carry them myself. We fought the wars, WWI and WWII, the Korean war, the First Gulf War, today in Afghanistan and the many peace keeping missions in between, we fought those wars always with a hope that our children would never have to fight again.

We remember our past so that we might have the strength and learn the lessons so that we might never have to go to war again.

The visions of war, the carnage of not only our soldiers but the civilians caught in the path of the tsunami of weapons, are etched forever in the faces of the soldiers who brought their stories home. They look back to the losses and yet, ideally, live in hope of a better future. We Christians are very similar - each week we look back at the life of Christ, remember his death and live in the hope of his resurrection. At once we are living in the past, in the present and in the future.

It's who we are and it's what we do.

So how might we live in the present that might make a better future? The bible in fact provides a very good blueprint for such a life. Here are ten ways of living that will help you live your life fully in the present while looking forward to a hopeful future.

The bible tells to listen without interrupting.

It tells us to speak without accusing.

It tells us to give without sparing.

It tells us to pray without ceasing.

It tells us to answer without arguing.

to share without pretending, to enjoy without complaint, to trust without wavering, to forgive without punishing and to promise without forgetting.

These ten points are simplistic, perhaps, verses plucked from the books of Proverbs, Colossians, Philipians and Corinthians, but simplistic or not they are words to live by. By following them, by patterning our lives by them, we may not be able to prevent a war but we will be living an authentic life in which we are honouring not only those around us but honouring ourselves; and by doing so we honour God.

Imagine, just imagine, everyone lived by these principals. If that is too large an idea then imagine that Canadians, even just Calgarians lived by these rules. Well, if even that is too much to ask then what if Christians lived their lives by listening without interrupting, speaking without accusing, give without sparing and to pray without ceasing. To begin, then, what if each of us here present tries to answer without arguing, share without pretending, enjoy without complaining, trust without wavering, forgive without punishing and to promise without forgetting? Just us.

We may not be able to prevent a war. We may not be able to heal the memories that our veterans carry on our behalf. We may not be able to bring peace to the world but maybe, just maybe, we will be able to change the immediate world

in which we live. We can, we must, attempt to live our lives in way that honours those people that we meet, honours ourselves and above all, honours God.

The story of the talents in the Gospel reading today reminds us to take the gifts that God has given us and multiply them in God's glory. By living in a conscious way, by living in a deliberate way we can follow the path that God has provided for us and make the lives of those around us better. And who knows, may be those around us will take what we offer the world and multiply it themselves. Huh. I think that's how movements start...

For all of the horrors that we have been spared, for all of the gifts that we have been given, and for all of the relationships we have the privilege of being in and making better, thanks be to God.