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25 April 2022

ANZAC Day

Reflection by Joe Tedesco

Introduction

ANZAC day is a national holiday that commemorates the landings of Australian and New Zealander soldiers at Gallipoli in 1915. It has since grown and become a day where the service and sacrifice of many people over many wars are acknowledged. The liturgy speaks to these virtues exemplified perfectly in the sacrifice of Jesus who gave his life for all humanity. With the gift of the Holy Spirit in our midst, we too are inspired to follow suit, exercising courageous sacrifice wherever God's love is needed.

Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus you came to bring us your Word so that we could love you.
Lord, have mercy.

You sent your Spirit to remind us of your love.
Christ, have mercy.

You came to give us your peace so that the world could not take it away.
Lord, have mercy.

First Reading

Wisdom 3:1-9

Those who serve God, even when it comes at great cost, are never forgotten by our Lord. Even when all seems lost, we are assured that the virtuous are in the hands of God.

Or

Isaiah 9:1-6

The weight of oppression, struggle and war will be taken away by our Lord. God's promise is of a 'Prince of Peace', a 'Wonder-Counsellor' who offers a peace that has no end.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 116(114):5-6; (117)10-11, 15-16.

I will walk in the presence of the Lord, in the land of the living.

All the afflicted are held as precious by the Lord.

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

The language of the cross is illogical. Yet, in this apparent image of weakness, God's strength is shown in a power to save.

Or

Ephesians 2:13-18

The letter to the Ephesians was speaking to an early Church impacted by hostility between Gentiles and Jews. The reading reminds us that Jesus is the one who truly brings peace, destroying in his own person such hostility between people.

Gospel Reading

John 12:23-28

A grain that remains a grain is a potential never realised. The grain that falls to the earth and dies, on the other hand, becomes a rich harvest.

Or

John 14:23-29

Jesus offers us peace, a peace that cannot be found apart from God but one that, nonetheless, we are invited to participate in.

Reflection

Like many ANZAC days before this one, today will be marked with ceremonies, parades, speeches and ritual acknowledgement of those who have served in the Australian and New Zealand armed forces. These ANZAC Day rituals will be full of pointers that ask us to think of that which has come before and the lives that were put at risk and lost as men and women served the nation in all sorts of situations.

Of course, at its best, ANZAC day is not a celebration of conflict itself. It does not necessarily glorify war. Particularly as we take in the liturgical readings which have been set for this celebration, ANZAC Day can allow us to recognise the broken world we live in that, whether we wish for it or not, has led to conflict. Even if we are fortunate enough to live in a situation where significant human conflict is avoided, where war is something seen in the news feed or on the nightly news rather than experienced first-hand, we all face adversity and will be called to respond to it

virtuously; with courage, resolutely and, perhaps most of all, to hold on to hope even when things seem lost. It is into this space that the liturgical celebration is able to bring something of true worth.

Firstly, and perhaps most obviously, we are reminded in our readings that this life we experience here is part of a bigger reality. Especially when we consider those who have lost their lives prematurely as wars are wont to cause, we are encouraged to draw on the hope of our faith. As indicated in the first of the readings offered for today from the Book of Wisdom, what appears as a disastrous end is the beginning of a peaceful existence with our saviour in heaven.

Similarly, for those who are innocent victims of wars, those non-combatants who nevertheless pay the cost. It is particularly distressing to our sensibilities that human conflict at its worst not only fails to spare the innocent but makes them particularly vulnerable. There are many parents, carers and children who have to exhibit extreme courage to look after their families in the most trying of circumstances who, nevertheless, lose their own lives and the lives of loved ones to brutality around them. It is this which perhaps represents the most significant fog of darkness that descends upon humanity during times of war. Though it is justifiably troubling, we reach out in faith that, as the prophet Isaiah proclaims, those people “who walk in darkness has seen a great light” (9:2), those who have had to walk in lands of “deep shadow” will find the light of rejoicing in the presence of God.

It certainly takes eyes of faith to hold to such a promise. As Paul attests in one of the second readings to the Corinthians, the language of the cross may be illogical, but it is the pathway to salvation.

Finally, we are reminded in our readings that conflict and war is never God’s desire. Even if it can bring forth virtues such as courage and perseverance from those who choose to serve and those who have no choice having simply been caught in the wrong place at the wrong time, God’s intent, both the end and the means to it, is peace. Returning to the reading from Isaiah, it speaks of a God who wishes to take the burden off the shoulders of the oppressed. In the Lord’s dominion, “peace has no end” (Isa 9:7). There is a particularly interesting line at the end of that verse. In the lectionary translation it reads as “the jealous love of the Lord of Hosts will do this”. It reads a little strangely because the Hebrew does not have a clear direct translation. More common translations use ‘zeal’ in place of ‘jealous love’ in this reference. The actual Hebrew root word *qin’â* basically represents strong passion and emotion for something, almost to the point of being uncontrollable. Thus, in a human setting it can be both a good and bad thing depending on the object and context. In this case, it is used by Isaiah to remind us just how passionate the Lord is about notions of justice, righteousness and peace for God’s people.

As the Gospel readings state, this zeal of God is not simply a passive sentiment. God is about actually bringing this world to peace and vitality. God cannot help but do so, it is in God’s very nature and this is found most prominently in the person of Jesus. The archetypical image of sacrificing for the good is captured in Christ who is like the “wheat grain that falls on the ground and dies” that allows “yields of great harvest” (Jn 12:24).

Moreover, and the Gospel readings point to this in particular, we are invited to be party to God's passionate desire for peace. We are to be agents of peace, a peace that we cannot create on our own, a peace "the world cannot give" (Jn 14:27). This is why we need the Advocate mentioned in the same Gospel reading; the Holy Spirit, God's ongoing presence offered to all so we can be encouraged and animated to bring peace into a world that often finds itself working against and despite each other rather than with and for each other.

Sacrifice and courage feature on ANZAC day, and also feature in the Christian call to bring God's will to bear in our world. It takes courage and it takes sacrifice to be a peacemaker, to be true to God's will for the world and to follow Jesus in not repaying evil with more evil but, rather, responding with sacrificial love. Sometimes this call can seem impossible, even folly. So, we pray that we are led by the Holy Spirit, focus on Jesus' words and receive the Advocate so we do what we can to bring our broken world closer to what God intends.



God's love
has no end.

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

The psalmist reminds us that we are all precious in God's sight and therefore we have the courage offer the needs of our world and home community.

Petitions

We pray for Pope Francis and our Church leaders; clergy, lay and religious. May they allow themselves to be guided by the Holy Spirit in all things.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for the leaders of all nations, that they will lead with integrity and honesty and bring peace to the world and recognise that war does not solve problems.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for our community, that we will courageously live our lives as witnesses to God's saving power particularly on this ANZAC day. May our actions speak of peace and harmony to our world.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all those who have died, particularly those in wars or who have given their lives for the sake of another. We ask that they may one day see the face of God.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all those who still suffer the long-lasting effects of war: refugees, returned service personnel, asylum seekers and disenchanted Australians. May they all find the peace of Christ.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for ourselves as we gather to share the Eucharist and remember those who have given themselves in sacrifice. May we, nourished at this table, be the face of peace to those in need.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Conclusion

God of peace, we offer these prayers and those unspoken in our hearts with the sure hope that they will be answered through the power of the Spirit and in the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

GA

God of peace. A Kelly CSsR/ C Willcock SJ. 553
For the healing of the nations. F Kaan/ H Purcell. 513
Make me a channel of your peace. S Temple. 490
My peace be upon you. C Willcock SJ. 518
No greater love. M Joncas. 460
O God, our help in ages past. I Watts/ W Croft. 459
Peace I leave with you my friends. G Norbet. 517

AOV1

Let there be peace on earth. S Miller/ J Jackson. 190
O God, our help in ages past. I Watts/ W Croft. 175

AOV2

Abide with me. H F Lyte/ W H Monk. 128
God of peace. A Kelly CSsR/ C Willcock SJ. 138
Make me a channel of your peace. S Temple. 126
My peace be upon you. C Willcock SJ. 96
Nearer, my God, to thee. S Adams/L Mason. 154

CWB

Help of Christians, guard this land. Richard Connolly. 711
Peace I leave with you. Gregory Norbet OSB. 785

CWBII

Advance Australia fair. Peter Dodds McCormack. 656
A blessing hymn for Australia. Michael Herry FMS. 655
For Australia. Michael Rayner & Honor Thwaites. 545
God of peace. Anthony Kelly Csr. 546
Help of Christians, guard this land. James Phillip McAuley. 429

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 71: *Justice shall flourish in his time, and fullness of peace for ever.*
Psalm 71: Noel Ansell. CWB 175
Psalm 72 (71): Jenny O'Brien. JOBA pg. 10
Psalm 114/115: *I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.*
Psalm 114/115: Noel Ansell. CWB 152a

Music selections by Michael Mangan

No greater love (SYJ) [Gathering, Recessional]
One body in Christ (Esp V1) (TWB) [Communion]
Peace for all time (TCS) [Communion, Recessional]