



REMEMBRANCE DAY

By Bill Pugh

Since the terrible slaughter in WWI which shocked the world, on the 11th day at the 11th hour of the 11th month, we stop in silence to remember. So much loss, sacrifice and courage is represented in that silence. Respect and reverence. Grief for young lives, cut off in their prime. Raw personal memories for many. And it continues today.

Around the world there are names on memorials and shrines, in cities, towns and tiny country villages. According to custom, services are held, tributes made and wreaths laid.

There is another reason to pause and remember at this time. There are other very special names, not written on memorials in church, chapel or shrine, or in any public record anywhere.

These are ordinary people like us, with personal names, homes and families, who have been obliterated from the face of the earth by murderous bombing, at the hands of evil men who control weapons of mass destruction. And now this happens in the very midst of our so-called civilised society. Some are killed in the name of religion.

Such is the force of destruction that whole families are obliterated from the face of the earth, as though they never were, leaving no mark nor imprint.

How will they be remembered, who have no memorial? The thought is overwhelming except, when we turn to scripture, tried and tested words of faith. We are encouraged to call God, Father, and to trust him as Jesus did. He spoke of the tiny sparrow, which falls to the ground mostly unnoticed. Save the assurance of the Lord, that not even the so-called seemingly unimportant is outside the Father's notice and care.

Remembrance is a reverent and thankful calling to mind of the sacrifice, the courage and selflessness of generations of the past, human tragedy and loss. It, equally, is a call to not let this count for nothing, nor to ignore the lessons of history.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus challenged his disciples with a radical approach to conflict. Awareness of spiritual poverty, humility, purity of motive, forgiveness and mercy, with love, even for enemies, and working for peace, and right behaviour to others, are what God requires.

With such commitment they will be salt of the earth and light to the world. Remembrance Day is enshrined in sacred memory. But with it comes a challenge to make the ideals of the Sermon on the Mount, real for life on the plain.