

Remembrance Reflection

What will you think about during the two-minute silence? Will you call to mind Flanders Fields? Or brave pilots in Lancaster bombers? Or perhaps those who perished in the ocean during the Battle of the Atlantic?

There's an almost overwhelming abundance of things that come to mind in those quiet moments, including the personal connections that many of us have of family and place.

For me, at some point during that brief pause, I'll look out at the assembled members of my ship's company. Though their heads will be bowed in respect, I'll glimpse the faces of ordinary men and women from up and down the UK, from across the Commonwealth, each of them serving far from their loved ones. And as I glance, I reflect that the war dead, whose memory we gather to honour, along with the many others who suffered through the ravages of war, were not so different to us. They too were ordinary men and women.

On our ship, we have a Book of Remembrance. It records the names of forebears who died in the World Wars, a young officer's great uncle, for example. Some sailors have also written the names of shipmates who have died more recently, including friends deeply missed. And just as with names engraved in stone on war memorials at home, behind each name is a story, a family, an utter tragedy.

A name that I've added to the book is that of Father Basil Gwydir, a Benedictine monk who served as a chaplain on the hospital ship Rohilla. In the midst of a storm. Among the sick and wounded to whom he ministered, Father Basil remained on board as the ship sank off the coast of Whitby on the 30 October 1914. He was the first Allied chaplain to die in the Great War.

Each of the countless millions who lost their lives in the two World Wars and conflicts since give powerful witness to Jesus's words in St John's Gospel, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Consider that the average sailor, soldier or aviator is motivated by a sense of loyalty that runs even deeper than commitment to a cause or one's country. Yes, they died for us, for our tomorrow. But in the heat of battle, they died, above all, for one another – for their friends. And I have no doubt that the men and women with whom I'll be standing later would do the same today.

And if, during the two minutes of silence, the enormous shadow of grief and the haunting prospect of future loss can't provoke each of us to rededicate ourselves to peace then, frankly, nothing will. Whatever else you choose to think about during the still moments later today and tomorrow, be sure to make good that solemn promise that we renew each year. We will remember them. They were not so different to us.

Dominican friar Fr Samuel Burke OP is a chaplain in the Royal Navy currently serving on HMS Duncan in the Mediterranean. He gave a poignant reflection on remembrance and honouring our war dead on BBC Radio 4's Thought for the Day.

Members of the Wedding

According to marriage customs of Jesus' day, a bride was first "betrothed" to her husband but continued for a time to live with her family. Then, at the appointed hour some months later, the groom would come to claim her, leading her family and bridal party to the wedding feast that would celebrate and inaugurate their new life together.

This is the background to the parable of the last judgment we hear in today's Gospel.

In the parable's symbolism, Jesus is the Bridegroom (see Mark 2:19). In this, He fulfills God's ancient promise to join Himself forever to His chosen people as a husband cleaves to his bride (see Hosea 2:16–20). The virgins of the bridal party represent us, the members of the Church.

We were "betrothed" to Jesus in Baptism (see 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:25–27) and are called to lives of holiness and devotion until He comes again to lead us to the heavenly wedding feast at the end of time (see Revelation 19:7–9; 21:1–4).

As St. Paul warns in today's Epistle, Jesus is coming again, though we know not the day nor the hour.

We need to keep vigil throughout the dark night of this time in which our Bridegroom seems long delayed. We need to keep our souls' lamps filled with the oil of perseverance and desire for God—virtues that are extolled in today's First Reading and Psalm.

We are to seek Him in love, meditating upon His kindness, calling upon His name, striving to be ever more worthy of Him, to be found without spot or blemish when He comes.

If we do this, we will be counted as wise and the oil for our lamps will not run dry (see 1 Kings 17:16). We will perceive the Bridegroom, the Wisdom of God (see Proverbs 8:12–21, 35; 9:1–6), hastening toward us, beckoning us to the table He has prepared, the rich banquet which will satisfy our souls.



Scott Hahn



English Martyrs
Vale of The White
Horse Pastoral Area

PARISHES OF THE ENGLISH MARTYRS, Didcot and ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST, Wallingford

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32ND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR A (WK III)

Entrance Antiphon: Ps 87:3

Let my prayer come into your presence. Incline your ear to my cry for help, O Lord.

First Reading: Wisdom 6:12-16

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 62

For you my soul is thirsting, O God, my God.

Second Reading: Thessalonians 4:13-18

Gospel Acclamation: Cf. Jn 6:68

Alleluia, alleluia! Stay awake and stand ready, because you do not know the hour when the Son of Man is coming. **Alleluia!**

Gospel: Matt.25:1-13

Communion Antiphon: Cf. Ps 22:1-2

The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want. Fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose, near restful waters he leads me.

SATURDAY 11th November- St Martin of Tours

9:30 Mass at English Martyrs, Didcot.....Amand Greenough RIP

4:30pm Adoration & Confessions will take place prior to the Vigil Mass at St John's Wallingford

5.00pm Vigil Mass St John's

5.50pm Adoration before Vigil Mass at English Martyrs, Didcot...

6.30pm Vigil Mass English Martyrs, Didcot....Deceased Family and Friends (Julie Lazarus)

SUNDAY... 12th November....32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time.

9:00am Mass English Martyrs, Didcot- Thanksgiving For Emily Samu's Birthday (Edwin Samu)

11:00noon Mass St John's Wallingford - Thanksgiving For Dante Chacin's Birthday (Romona)

MONDAY 13th October-.....NO MASS

TUESDAY 14th October....

12:00noon Mass St John's Wallingford...

WEDNESDAY 15th November-St Albert the Great

9:30am Mass English Martyrs, Didcot..

THURSDAY 16th November.....St Edmund of Abingdon

9:30am —Mass St John's Wallingford... Douglas Jeffery RIP (Christine Jeffery)

FRIDAY 17th November... St Elizabeth of Hungary

9.30.a.m Mass at the English Martyrs, Didcot...Good Estate of Rosemary Jacobs (Mary Almeida)

SATURDAY 18th November- Dedication of the Basilicas of Ss Peter & Paul

9:30 Mass at English Martyrs, Didcot.....

4:30pm Adoration & Confessions will take place prior to the Vigil Mass at St John's Wallingford

5.00pm Vigil Mass St John's

5.50pm Adoration before Vigil Mass at English Martyrs, Didcot...

6.30pm Vigil Mass English Martyrs, Didcot....Mary McGill (Naughton)

SUNDAY... 19th November....33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time.

9:00am Mass English Martyrs, Didcot-

11:00noon Mass St John's Wallingford - Barbara Joy Elcock RIP (Richard Chadwick)



In your prayers, please remember: Jenny Evans, Mary Guinan, John Logan, Ann Tomline, Joan Walker, Terry Appleyard, Joan Russell, Joan Turner, Nina Oakes, Jacob Oakes, Jidechi Ejiolor, Pat McLoughlin, Margaret Healy, Barry Molloy, David Woodley, Annie Furlong, Fr Philip Harris, all the sick and housebound.



All Souls In November

The opportunity to remember and pray for the souls of our loved ones and others the whole month of November is here again. Envelops are available at the entrance of the Church for you to insert names of those you wish to be remembered in prayers. Please do NOT include cash. Return the filled envelop to the designated place for the prayers. Special thanks to the Flower Ladies for preparing a special spot for this.



Takeover Challenge Days: Kamdi and Daniele

The parish of English Martyrs Didcot and St John the Evangelist Wallingford provided placement opportunities for Kamdi Anike and Daniele Staughte of Year 9 from the Didcot 6th Form School for the Takeover Challenge Days, Wednesday 8th to Friday 10th November, 2023.

We are delighted that Kamdi and Daniele took roles of planning, designing the placement of the "Heavenly Harolds," sorting of sacred items, pricing and arranging the entrance of the Church. This effort has added beauty and aesthetics to the entrance to the foyer of English Martyrs.

Kamdi and Daniele spent hours shadowing Camilla King. She was pleased to observe that the girls showed a great sense of responsibility, timing, team work, communication skills. We hope that this experience will ignite in them employability and leadership skills as they displayed enthusiasm at the tasks they did. We wish them well in their future tasks and studies. Thanks to their teachers, parents and Camilla.

Men's Group Meeting

The Men's Group advertised a couple of weeks ago is read to the ground running. Our first meeting is this week, Wednesday 15th, November 2023 at 18:30pm. We shall meet in the Tea Room at the English Martyrs, Didcot. Come let us share the experience of being Catholic men, support one another spiritually and emotionally. It is our hope that from one another's experience we can enrich each other, and draw from Bishop Philip's 'Six Habits'.

The plan is to model our parish Men's Group on the same proven format. It's very relaxed and casual. There is no 'Bible Study'. We share our well-being during the past month in a trusted and confidential space and we each gain a lot of support. We spend 30 mins each sharing our thoughts and insight of the mass reading of the day and finish with intercessory prayer. The meeting duration is 1 1/2 hrs. 6:30-8pm There is no requirement or commitment to attend every month as we all have work and family commitments. Please pray for the new group. Do contact me if you would like to know more. Geoff Hassett 07874155465 geoffhassett@gmail.com

"CAFOD Israeli-Palestinian Crisis Appeal"

Dear Father,
We have all been shocked and saddened by the devastating conflict in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory. CAFOD's local partners in Gaza and southern Israel are now actively responding and providing urgent humanitarian aid to those in need.

- We have sent £100,000 to our local partner, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) who are already supporting 10,000 families with cash vouchers. Families are using these to purchase essentials like food and water as well as mattresses and bedding from wholesale suppliers in Gaza.

- We have committed £50,000 to our local partner, Culture and Free Thought Association, who are sheltering 300 people in their centres in Gaza and are supporting them with cash assistance, food, water and offering counselling to those dealing with losing their loved ones, their homes and their livelihoods.

- We have released £10,000 to our local partner Sadaka Reut, working in southern Israel with local emergency support groups providing psychological support, basic humanitarian assistance and building emotional resilience.

Sadly, staff and volunteers in our partner organisations have already lost their lives and tragically news has reached us this morning that more local staff in Gaza have been killed. They tell us that your support and your prayers of solidarity for those putting their lives at risk to help during this crisis are needed now more than ever.

We would be grateful for your help in letting your parishioners know how they can support our appeal. We enclose below a short notice for your parish newsletter or Facebook page and have an appeal poster here that you can print and place on your noticeboard.....

Donate to CAFOD's Israeli-Palestinian Crisis Appeal at cafod.org.uk/ipc or call 0303 303 3030 to support those affected and get funds to local trusted experts in Gaza and southern Israel who have been working alongside communities helping those most in need. Your donation will help support aid workers providing urgent humanitarian aid including food, water and emergency shelter to those in need. Thank you for your prayers."

And a downloadable image of our Prayer for peace in the Middle East for your parish Facebook page or website.



Remembrance Sunday

On the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month in 1918 the guns of Europe fell silent. After four years of the most bitter and devastating fighting, The Great War was finally over. The Armistice was signed at 5.a.m in a railway carriage in the Forest of Compiègne, France on November 11, 1918. Six hours later, at 11.a.m, the war ended.

- Pray for peace and reconciliation between nations, that enemies may put aside all differences.

- Pray for all those who have died through war or acts of violence in defense of our country, may we never forget their sacrifice.



Welcome To The Catenians

Representatives of the Oxford Circle of the Catenian Association will be visiting and attending the 9:00 Sunday Mass at the English Martyrs, Didcot, and stay thereafter for tea and coffee. The Catenians are an international Catholic organisation and the Oxford Circle has recently celebrated their 80th anniversary. You are invited to come along to the Tea Room, have tea or coffee and find out more about who the Catenians are and what they do.



Cake Sales At St John's Wallingford

There will be a cake sale at St John's after the 11 a.m. Mass on Sunday December 3rd. All contributions of cakes and help to serve teas welcome...please sign form at the back of St John's.

Children's Christmas cards will be available for sale from December 10th.
Gay Bosley



Calling All Musicians and Singers

English Martyrs is looking for more singers and instrumentalists to help lead the music at Masses on 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month. On 3rd Sundays of the month we would love young musicians of the parish, of secondary school age, to help us, starting on 17 December. On 1st Sundays we are looking for all who sing or play – perhaps you would like to join as a family? The gift of music is so precious and it is so rewarding to share it with others – please offer your gifts back to the Lord by serving Him and your fellow parishioners. Please approach anyone in the music group or contact the parish office.



Rethink Remembrance: Poppy Appeal 2023

Our poppy supports the Armed Forces community, past and present. The Royal British Legion is asking the nation to Rethink Remembrance by recognising the sacrifices made by the Armed Forces community, past and present. By wearing a poppy, you aren't just remembering the fallen: you're supporting a new generation of veterans and service personnel that need the charity's support.

Buying and wearing your paper poppy is the easiest way to support, but there are lots more fundraising ideas from shopping at the RBL online shop to joining Poppy walks or baking poppy cakes.



Mass in the Children's Liturgy Room

Weekday masses are now celebrated in the Children's Liturgy Room, here in Didcot. This begins with private adoration, except when otherwise advertised. The move to celebrate in the Liturgy Room is to cut down on the cost of heating the main Church with only a handful of people in attendance. Kindly bear with us and come, let us pray and adore the Lord. Be blessed

Rosary for Peace At English Martyrs "

The world desperately needs peace. Come let us offer the world peace through prayers before our loving Father in the Most Blessed Sacrament on the Altar. From Saturday 11th November the Rosary will be prayed during Adoration before Mass at 8:50am. Please join in. This shift will replace our after mass Rosary.



Menu for November 23rd Senior Lunch!

This is to say a huge THANK YOU to all those involved in the monthly Senior Lunch. The October one was well attended, the meal wonderful and atmosphere warm and chatty. Thanks to all who came! We invite you again, seniors for Senior Lunch on Thursday 23rd November at 12 noon in English Martyrs Didcot Tearoom? Menu and Names list are on the board by Tearoom. Main course: Seafood Chowder (fish, prawns, mussels) with potatoes and carrots, Bread, Sweet: Apple Strudel with custard. Kindly consider anyone you consider on his or her own to invite.

