

Evensong readings:-

by

Judges ch.7, vv.2-22.

Didymus

John ch.15, vv.9-17.



Well, here we are again, locked down for everyone's safety. It deprives us of many things that make life good, and on this Sunday, we are sadly deprived of one of the most important occasions in the Christian and secular years. Remembrance Sunday. The memory of the huge numbers of killed or injured in WW1, WW2, Northern Ireland, the Middle and Far East is perhaps beyond us, but we need to try. Our Lord Jesus Christ would surely require us to think beyond national boundaries to our friends, allies, and yes, even our enemies, especially those forced to fight against their wills.

It also deprives us of the pageantry with which we remember – the Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance, and the ceremony on the following Sunday at the Cenotaph, the ceremony which brings our monarchy, our politicians, the many brave people who march in memory, and the church. While what we see remains the same, the unspoken thanks from people like me who have lived in peace, adds a spiritual dimension, a thankfulness.

In our prayers we will no doubt add our thanks, but in addition we need to pray for the work of the Royal British Legion, and the sister organisations for supporting service personnel and their dependants. The role of the armed forces in keeping peace and bringing justice and freedom where little exists should also be in our prayers.

The OT reading is the story of Gideon and his defeat of the invading Midianite army by following God's word. It is a fascinating story, and I remember the joy of the children at St.Minver school with "Open the Book": they were Gideon's troops and marched around blowing made-up trumpets and generally making a noise that would have normally brought a posse of teachers running. Gideon was one of 11 judges. After Joshua had invaded Canaan, the judges were appointed, and their function was to police the tribes, and to act as military leaders if needed. Samson was another.

The reading from the Book of John's 15th chapter is very, very important. The parable of the True Vine is one of the most important in the whole Bible, illustrating well the relationship between Jesus and ourselves, which Jesus then continues to talk about. The authors of the Lectionary have done it yet again – read all 17 verses, not just 9-17!

A new covenant was first referred to in the Book of Jeremiah, and again it is referred to here, although Jesus was addressing his Disciples. When one considers the words of this Gospel reading, the words of Jesus at the Last supper as in Luke, and the Great Commission at Ascension, Jesus' new covenant simply said:-

"If you will take me into your life, then I will take you into mine. If you will keep me in your heart and mind, I will always be with you."



It is this simple promise which Jesus gave us which is the foundation for our Christian faith. It is our anchor. Yet it is not easy to keep his words in mind during a busy day at work when worry, anger, frustration and distraction assail us. All aspects of a Christian life, living, relating and praying require a persistence which can baffle, but we should keep at it.

I have included an illustration of the Last Supper which has been adapted as a pattern for embroidery. The original illustration



was too poor to reproduce but I hope it will be of interest. I saw the original at the church of Santa Maria della Grazie in Milan, and sadly it was poor condition. I think Da Vinci set up his models in a church hall, and the setting is 15th century rather than 1st in my view. Knowing church halls I expect that table is still in use.



I couldn't resist putting Caravaggio's painting of my pseudonym examining the Risen Jesus' hands and feet. Caravaggio was able to express in paint the amazement of witnesses so well.

Stay safe and well. AMEN