

We will remember them

“Do this in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat the bread and drink the cup you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”

A couple of weeks ago, I went with James to a service at the crematorium for NVFs (non viable foetuses). There was one couple there in particular who wanted to take photos so that their two-year old child would remember that she had once had a baby brother or sister, even though that life had barely been a life, and even twenty years ago would probably have been disposed of as waste without any invitation to the parents for any sort of service of commendation to recognise their grief; without any recognition that there had existed a potential life, that didn’t make it into full incarnation. They also wanted a plaque on the wall, and wanted to know where in the garden of remembrance the ashes would be scattered, presumably so they could visit and remember that child that nearly was.

It is important to remember. At All Saints and All Souls we remember, though less so now with the intrusion of Halloween and all the attendant commercialisation, those who have died, especially in the previous year. On 11 November we remember those who have died in wars and conflicts, partly in the hope that such things will never happen again.

At all of these times we ask for peace; peace for those who have departed, and peace for those who remain; the peace of God that passes all understanding. Peace can be peaceful; it can also be an active thing, bringing an end to conflict, aggression and hostility. Every time we celebrate the Lord’s Supper, we do it in remembrance. We remember the death AND the resurrection. We are a people that move on through death to the resurrection. But we do have to go through the death; there is no avoiding the hard days and the dark times.

This year, 11 November also happens to be the start of Interfaith Week. A friend of mine, a Church of England vicar, who also works for an interfaith organisation in Bradford, is part of a group of Muslim and Christian women who will be sleeping outside in a car park on the night of 11 November to raise money for War Child – combining the remembrance of war with the hope of unity that interfaith activities across the country are trying to foster. This year, 11 November is both a day to remember all victims of conflict, many of whom are children, and the first day of a week which aims to show that people of different faiths can come together in friendship and concern for others; just as St John’s and Iron Aid plan to come together to provide a centre for all the local community.



Today’s call to worship from the prophet Micah speaks of different peoples coming together in peace - they shall learn war no more – yet they come together as themselves, they are not amalgamated into one homogenous people, but respect each others’ different traditions: “they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid”

The Tree of Life in the photo is made by Mozambican artists from decommissioned weapons

<https://www.warchild.org.uk/>