

Remembrance Sunday, 10.45am, 13 November 2016,
Vendée.

Malachi 4. 1-2a (Psalm 98)

2 Thessalonians 3. 6-13

Luke 21. 5-19

Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, 'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you'.

Please sit down.

(I briefly referred to the readings from 2 Thessalonians and Luke pointing out the while many people prophesy when Jesus will return, Jesus himself tells us he doesn't know when. It seems the Paul preached about the second coming

and some Thessalonians though he meant this would happen so soon that they could give up work. He writes to put them straight.)

I continued by saying that the address would focus on Remembrance Sunday:-

When I first sailed through the Dardanelles, a commentary of the First World War operations there was broadcast over the ship's loud speaker. I was really sad, knowing that the remains of my uncle, and the remains of his submarine, were on the sea bed below us. We were sailing past the coast of Gallipoli where so many men from Australia and New Zealand perished. They are remembered in those countries on ANZAC Day.

We grieve, we remember, we rejoice.

The paradox of war is that its purpose is to establish peace. In an ideal world it would not be necessary to send so many young people to risk, and even give, their lives. Nor would it be necessary to spend a huge proportion of our gross national product on weapons of war. In an ideal world, we could use their talents and spend all that money on things like education and training, healing and health-care, restoration, beauty and truth.

As it is, after war comes reconstruction. Coventry and Dresden were rebuilt. In Afghanistan a few years ago great efforts were made to build and rebuild infrastructure, not to mention the life and aims of Malala Yousufzai. Eventually

refugees will be able to return to Syria, and Eastern Aleppo will be rebuilt. There will be peace in Yemen and South Sudan.

We grieve, we remember, we rejoice.

At the crash site in Angles and then at the War Graves Commission cemetery on Friday we remembered the airmen who died. In England there are some Thankful Villages, where everyone returned from active service at the end of the wars. Alas Puy de Serre was not one of those villages. The names of their war dead are commemorated on the plaque on the pillar of this church.

Today we remember their and our war dead.

We grieve, we remember, we rejoice.

While the self-sacrifice of members of the armed forces in war looks very similar to what Jesus Christ has done, it isn't quite the same.

We grieve because Jesus died for our sins on the cross. We grieve, not only because we have sinned but also because Christ died.

We remember because Jesus Christ, on the night before he died, took bread, gave thanks and said, 'do this in remembrance of me'. Then he took the cup, gave thanks and said, 'do this in remembrance of me'.

We rejoice because, on the third day he rose again from the dead.

At this altar we remember Jesus Christ, the saviour of the world.

We grieve, we remember, we rejoice.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.