

A few words from the Vicar

*They shall not grow old as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.*

A few days before I left my last church I attended the funeral of a man in his 90s. His name was Arthur

Arthur had attended St James in New Bury all of his life. He was baptised there as a baby and as a young man was married there. He was a committed Christian and was still an active member of the Church in his 90s. So it was fitting that we his family and friends should come to St James for his funeral; to commend him to God and to thank God for everything he meant to us.

Remembrance Sunday was especially poignant for Arthur. For more years than anyone cared to remember, it had been Arthur's job to place the poppy wreath at the foot of the war memorial in church.

Arthur would then read the names of those parishioners who'd lost their lives in the First and Second World Wars but would pause momentarily before reading one name in particular; that of his father. Sadly Arthur's father was killed at Passchendaele in 1917 and Arthur never knew him.

And then, whilst serving in the Royal Navy on D Day, Arthur himself narrowly missed joining his father on the list of the fallen. He told me once that a shell exploded on the spot where he'd been standing just moments earlier, killing some close friends.

There is a terrible human cost to war and Arthur's experiences were far from unusual for people of his generation. It is therefore fitting that Christ Church, in common with churches all over the country observes Remembrance Sunday each year; to remember before God those who have suffered and died as a result of war; to remember those like Arthur's father who went off to war and never returned; and to remember those for whom the scars of war are every much as real today as they were when the Second World War ended 65 years ago.

In recent years Arthur had been joined at the war memorial by a younger man. He'd served in the Army and had lost a good friend in Iraq. Standing alongside Arthur, his presence was a stark reminder to me of the sacrifices being made by those serving in the forces today.

And this younger man's presence reminded me that Remembrance Sunday has not lost any of its importance with the passage of years. As well as being an important occasion for remembering before God the sacrifices of past generations, Remembrance Sunday reminds us that we need to pray for today's generation of service men and women for whom danger is an ever present reality.

Every Blessing

Dave



Troops moving up to the Front, 1917
(Source: National library of Scotland)