



Galaxies Evening Service 22 April 2012

Service by Pete Cowley
& Fergus Collinson



Welcome:

Welcome to our gathering this afternoon.

Our theme is : **ANZAC - Sacrifice & Forgiveness.** How do we juggle the idea of sacrifice of the lives of ANZAC soldiers and forgiveness of those that caused the war out of greed for power and control.



Roll of honour stretching into what seems like ... eternity!

Call to togetherness and sharing:

Leader: We are all part of the rhythm of life.

As we gather together to share of ourselves and our journey, may peace and love be with us.

All: May we be makers of the peace and givers of unbounded love.

Passing the Peace:

Leader: Now that another season comes to an end and another begins, we are reminded that God the free Spirit shares itself with us through the wheel of life, the turning of the planet and the seasons, we can share our ever developing and changing peace and love with one another.

Let us feel the power of the earth that holds us together.

Let us celebrate our gifts of harvest food.

Let us all rejoice in the power and our beauty.

All: We open our hearts to the miracle of nature and the mystery of God's love in all Creation. We carry in us the divine spark. The gift of love, which we share tonight, deepens us as people, deepens us as sisters and brothers.

Each person shares hugs, or whatever you are comfortable with, with those around them.



Notices

Reflection By Ian Harris 2010

ONE of the enduring values of Anzac Day is that it is rooted in a campaign defeat, not a victory. Another is that it honours those who died in this and other battles as individuals - sons and husbands, teachers and labourers, officers and other ranks, whose names are preserved on public monuments and on rolls of honour in churches and schools.

These two emphases help to keep the day as one of gratitude and remembrance, not of glorifying war.

It was not always so. For most of history the battles commemorated were victories that swelled the pride of nations. So the Arc de Triomphe in Paris celebrates Napoleon's victories, while London has its Waterloo Station and Trafalgar Square.

No public memorials list the thousands who died in those battles. They are the anonymous dead, remembered officially, if at all, only by the colours they fought under.

Just over a century ago, attitudes began to change. Those who made up the military masses came to be valued in their own right as individuals. One sign of this is the appearance of their names, not just the generals', on memorial plaques and columns. Another is the honoured place given to "the unknown soldier" in national memorials.

A further transition, not yet complete, began when growing numbers of people realised that war, far from being the noblest act of service men and women can rise to, is actually the stupidest of all ways to further national ambitions or resolve international disputes. Every military cemetery is testimony to its futility and horror.

Also, weapons of mass destruction are increasingly indiscriminate in the swathes they cut through civilian populations - and in an age of targeted terrorism that stretches deep into civilian heartlands, their deterrence value is much diminished.

On Sunday those who died will be praised for paying the "supreme sacrifice", a term that carries the world of ancient religion into the modern consciousness. For to sacrifice means, according to its Latin origin, "to do a sacred thing".

When every nation or tribe had its own god, and the interests of the nation and its god coincided, it was only natural to say with the Roman poet Horace: "It is a sweet and seemly thing to die for the fatherland."

In our emerging global village, the gods of nationalism will always be way too small. As nurse Edith Cavell, facing execution by a German firing squad in 1915, said: "Patriotism is not enough. I must have no hatred or bitterness towards anyone." She had a bigger God.

Courage, too, is not enough. No feat of courage can validate an ignoble cause.

Germans fought courageously for the dominance of Hitler's master race. Japanese died valiantly for their emperor. The suicide bombers of Hamas and Israel's military assassins may be courageous, but theirs is a kind of courage the world can do without.

In the modern world any cause limited to the aggrandisement of one's own tribe, country or religion, any cause less than the enlargement of human well-being as a whole, is unworthy. And there are better ways of achieving that than going to war.

Yet politicians still paint every military expedition in the idealistic colours of establishing peace or expanding freedom, even as they calculate the spin-offs in regional influence, investment opportunities, or oil.

That is why on days of commemoration the distinction must be drawn between leaders who were prepared to sacrifice others to further their aims, and those on the front line who, while not seeking death, were ready to accept it as the consequence of their engagement in battle.

Few probably thought of this as doing a sacred thing, but all illustrate the Oxford Dictionary's more secular definition of "giving up a valued thing for the sake of another". On the whole of the planet, there is nothing more valuable they could give than their lives.

Likewise, there is no better way of honouring that sacrifice than taking every opportunity to build a just and harmonious human community.

Two and a half thousand years ago the Hebrew prophets were already saying that their God did not want the sacrifice of animals: the proper way to "do a sacred thing" was for people to put right their relationships with others.

That might include "giving up a valued thing" such as time, money, status, pride, even elements of national sovereignty, if it would make their community and world a better and a fairer place, and therefore more secure.

They have yet to be proved wrong.

Sharing our thoughts and reflections

HERES a DYNAMIC PHOTO PHIL TOOK oF

Hannah and me, tranquilly
considering possibilities
Who is the man in the middle?
I can't remember
Turmoil and war are like that!
Today
somebody grabbed Seth's
speaker boxes
I love it!
I like it that there's
less:clutter!
Arohanui! for re-arranging my
picnic cups, and pinhole Fiji/
singlet - red and blue
blazing bright - too cold to ever wear - beautifully



A Prayer - When Remembering Sad Times

A shoot came out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. *Isiah 11:1*
O God who moves in us, through the sad moods of the soul
and in the discovery of new growth from the stump of
Jesse, settle my silent pulse, and graft me into your new
creation.

May your gift of eternal life, born in a stable, nailed on a
tree, bring me a sacred energy to receive and to give love,
and to forest a community of faith, in which we hear the
echo of your footsteps. Amen

You cannot pray with a closed mind.
You cannot pray if you need to always be in control.
You cannot pray if you believe the whole of life is a marketplace.

You can pray if you are listening for a new tune.
You can pray if you can let go some old habits.
You can pray if you believe that life is a gift.

Prayer is not connecting with a celestial telephone exchange.

It is an anguished sigh, a focused serenity, a watchful hope.

Above all, prayer is about patience, waiting for the futility of violence to be relearned by each
generation. Pray to see the story through the eyes of a child.

