

Remembrance for Today

remembering war, making peace

readings, reflections, prayers, and other resources

Edited by Christine Titmus

Foreword by General Sir Hugh Beach

Movement for the Abolition of War

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Contents

Foreword	
General Sir Hugh Beach	v
Introduction	vi
The Act of Remembering	
What Do We Remember? Who Do We Remember?	1
Remembering Presents Us with Responsibility – two reflections	2
We Remember Them – responsive reflection	3
Symbols/Blessing of Candles	4
Repentance	
Truth and Repentance	5
Statement of Repentance	6
Memory and Repentance	6
Act of Repentance	7
Sorrow for the Wrongs of the Past – including Two Minutes Silence	8
Litany of Reconciliation	10
Reflections & Readings	
The Veteran’s Lament	11
The Two Mothers	12
Show Us the Way to Peace	13
The House of Love	14
We are Brothers!	14
Christian ‘Heroes and Heroines’	15
Suggested Bible Readings	16
Prayer & Intercession	
Remembrance Prayer 1	18
Remembrance Prayer 2	18
Jesus our Peace	20
For Peacemakers	21
Prayer of Commitment	21
Prayers for All	22

Prayers for Peace	22
For Victims of War Today	23
Prayer for Peace and Justice	24
Renewal of Commitment to Peacemaking	25
Working for Peace—Two Affirmations	
God Loves This World – Affirmation of Faith	26
Community Affirmation	27
Poetry, Hymns & Songs	
Remorse	28
Parable of the Old Man and the Young Man	29
Dulce et Decorum est	30
Glory of Women	30
Vietnam War	31
Men against Men	31
For the Healing of the Nations	32
If The War Goes On	32
If What They Mean by Peace...	34
Make me a Channel of Your Peace	34
Turn Our Hands to Peace	35
Peacemaking in the 21 st century	
– three closing reflections	37
Acknowledgements	39

Foreword

Remembrance is important. By 1914 recollections of the American Civil War and the Franco-Prussian War had become so dim that World War I was welcomed with people hoping that it might rejuvenate an exhausted civilization. The poet Wilfred Owen wrote, 'O meet it is and passing sweet to live in peace with others, but sweeter still and far more meet, to die in war for brothers'. Three years spent on the front line changed his mind. In 1917 he nailed what he now called 'the old Lie: Dulce et decorum est Pro patria mori'. He was to die in action a week before the war ended.

Growing up during World War II, my generation was steeped in the anti-war literature of the twenties and thirties. None of us went to war under any illusion that it would be sweet or decorous. In the decades of peace that followed we feared that memories of the wars would fade away, but this did not happen. Films, plays, novels, poems and museums dealing with these things are as popular as ever. Nowhere is this more plainly seen than in the urge to commemorate.

This may be due to the sheer scale of these events and to the quality of the writers, artists and actors who have depicted them. Another reason may be that British troops have been killed in action every year since then, bar one (1968). During the past half-century Britain has fought more foreign wars than any other country. Tony Blair as Prime Minister ordered our troops into battle five times in six years. Commemoration is as important to us as ever.

Those for whom the old formulas are growing stale will find this collection just what they wanted. While reminding us, in the words of the Buddhist Dharmavidya, that 'there may be just wars', it puts the stress on war as a blunt instrument, always the cause of untold suffering. We are led to repent and look instead to ways to seek peace and pursue it - not least in ourselves. As the Franciscan Richard Rohr remarks, 'if we still think the Russians or the Iraqis are the problem, it's probably because we haven't forgiven the enemy within'. This book will help us.

Hugh Beach

Introduction

Why this book? And why now?

We at the Movement for the Abolition of War (MAW) have become aware of a growing concern about the content and context of remembrance ceremonies, not only from peace activists but also from retired military personnel, clergy and young people.

The remembrance ceremony was born many decades ago, into a very different world. Yet, in more modern times it seems to take place sometimes without much relevance to the realities of modern warfare, the increased dangers of resorting to war in the twenty-first century, and the fact that the majority of today's 'war dead' are not soldiers, but civilians – and half of them children.

It is not that remembrance is no longer necessary, far from it. It is vital that a place and time are reserved to recall, with regret, the mass slaughter humanity inflicts upon itself in the name of war.

However, do those we honour deserve more? Do we not have a responsibility, alongside our remembering, to ask what we could learn from their deaths, and to act upon what we learn? Sometimes it seems that our traditional forms for remembrance play down an emphasis on learning, and even less on developing that learning into action.

Is this really the best that we can hope for with our services of remembrance? Can we not imagine a better way to honour their memory? Surely we need to show our respect by seeking to do all we can to save their descendents from the same fate. If that is so, then the material we use needs to reflect this.

As MAW encountered these sorts of concerns, we came across a familiar query about whether we had any alternative resources. Over time material was collected and then sent out on request, and the feedback was appreciative. The requests increased, the collection grew, and this book is the result.

Here you will find poems, reflections, readings, songs and excerpts from a wide range of literature for use at events and ceremonies, whether large or small, religious or non-religious. As remembrance is commemorated mainly by Christian churches and groups this is reflected in the material.

In compiling *Remembrance for Today* we have been aware of the lack of material specifically designed with children and young people in mind. Of course, an essential part of remembrance is the need to pass on an understanding of the lessons of war to the next generation. We are aware of some churches and groups who have developed imaginative liturgies and activities to include children and teenagers and we would be interested to hear about others.

Indeed, we hope very much that this resource will develop in the light of the comments of readers and users. We would be keen to hear about suggestions of any additional material that could be included in a future edition, so please feel free to contact us.

Christine Titmus

We honour their memory by:

Acknowledging the truth about war

*Recognising that war is always
a sign of human failure*

*Making a commitment
to work for peace*

The Evil Within and Without

*For most people,
it is easy to focus on the malevolent misdeeds
of one's enemies and to blot out the memory
of one's own malevolent misdeeds.*

*For some people, it is easy to do the reverse:
bare our hearts to our own evildoing
and forget what has been done to us.*

*But only if we remember both sets of evildoing
can we take the steps to end them.*

Rabbi Arthur Waskow

The Act of Remembering

What Do We Remember?

Remembrance conceals the past as much as it remembers it. It is a story deeply biased by the need to make past actions seem necessary and to lend moral credibility to present policies. In order to do this it has to make sense of much that was entirely without sense. For instance, the very act of remembering such appalling events as the Battle of the Somme obscures most that was true about it. The way it has gone down in history is in accordance with the mythology of 'great battles' which conceals most of the important things that happened on the ground.

So episodes of the most appalling chaos, stupidity and destruction get elevated into glorious moments in 'Our Island Story' ... we could add to this such historical absurdities such as 'The battle of Hamburg' in World War II in which 44,000 civilians burned and suffocated to death in one night under Bomber Command. 'Battle' gives the impression of a fight, where there was merely a massacre. It is part of the sanitization process which all modern warfare undergoes at the hands of the media and government propaganda – we can call it 'the old lie' ...

Who Do We Remember?

Remembrance today is not easily adaptable to modern mass warfare against civilians. The mythology of battles has a strong hold. Remembrance is supposed to be about the heroes fallen in battle, not about women and children and old men who happen to be in the way of the bombs. The mass deaths of civilians are not noble like the death of a warrior. This doesn't fit the accepted understanding of 'sacrifice'...

...and nor does the heroism of all those executed or imprisoned for refusing to kill. Like Franz Jaegerstaetter who was beheaded for refusing to fight in Hitler's army.

Mass destruction from the air puts an end to heroic resistance. Yet today this is the truth of war – only one in every ten to die through war will be in the armed services...

Roger Ruston

Remembering Presents us with Responsibility

- Two Reflections

Encounter from a visit to the D-Day anniversary in France, 2004

At St Aubin-sur-Mer, I found two young people taking photographs of one another in front of the Canadian war memorial.

Celine Trotignon, 22, from Toulouse, said it was the first time that she had visited the Normandy beaches.

‘The Americans said last year that we had forgotten what they did here, because we wouldn’t fight with them in Iraq. But I don’t think that young French people have forgotten,’ she said.

‘On the contrary, we believe that we should remember what happened here – all the young men of my age who died – not to justify other wars but to help us stop it ever happening again.’

‘To grieve ... is never enough’

To grieve, to ‘remember’ in penitence and thanksgiving, is never enough. Two young men who fought against each other in the Falklands War lie today buried side by side at Port Stanley. They are commemorated in a poem by the blind Argentinian poet, Jorge Luis Borges – each one was Cain and each one was Abel – and they buried them together. Caught up in a conflict they could not understand and which remains still unresolved, they serve to remind us that war has still, in Pope John Paul II’s words, not been removed from the world’s agenda; each one of us has to add his particular, unique and living stone to the ‘Cathedral of Peace’ of which he spoke to us. After the grief, the penitence and the thanksgiving there can be no more effective way of ‘remembering’ the waste and pity of war. In the words of Joe Hill, the 19th Century Trades Union leader: ‘Don’t mourn, organise!’

Just as peace without justice is a lie and a deception, so grieving without self-giving is a mockery and an indulgence. Whether our words become deeds or remain merely hollow cliché and empty rhetoric, so that we lose ourselves in abstractions and a general feeling of benevolence, depends on a willingness to obey the command to ‘do good in minute particulars’. In abstract love of humanity, says Dostoevsky, one almost always only loves oneself.

From *The Heart has Seasons* by Revd Graham Dowell

We Remember Them

Ninety per cent of deaths in modern armed conflict are civilian, half of these are children. So, we remember today all victims, of all wars, past and present.

Those who suffered or were killed as a result of war.

We remember them.

Those who suffered or were executed because they refused to kill in war.

We remember them.

All people bereaved because of war.

We remember them.

All those who are refugees due to war.

We remember them.

Those suffering injury through war.

We remember them.

People suffering disease through war.

We remember them.

Children made orphans through war.

We remember them.

All who became homeless due to war.

We remember them.

Those people starving due to war.

We remember them.

Those people enduring mental trauma due to war.

We remember them.

All people made destitute because of war.

We remember them.

Symbols of Remembrance

Candles – people can light these from one central light and then place them all together.

Rosemary – common garden herb worn as sign of remembrance. Can be used to decorate churches.

Poppies – historic association with death long before World War I due to the link between opium and sleep. Red poppies grow in Flanders fields, although the French chose to use blue cornflowers which also grew there. Many people like to wear a red and white poppy together – the red for military deaths, the white for civilian, and as a sign of commitment to peace.

Bells – the sorrowful tolling of a single bell while people remain in silence is a dignified alternative to military bugles.

Blessing of candles

(When using candles within a service)

Lord God almighty, creator of all life, of body and soul, we ask you to bless these candles that they be a sign of your burning love for all people who have suffered, and still suffer, because of war. May that love blaze up within our hearts and make us courageous in doing your will alone. Amen.

At the point people are invited to come forward and light a candle:

Loving Father, remember Christ your Son who is peace itself and who washed away our hatred with His blood. Because you love all people, look with mercy on us and on these candles that shine for all. Banish the violence and evil within us, and as we cry for help restore tranquility and peace. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Repentance

Truth and Repentance

Can it be called a true 'history' that blinds us to what we did in the war? We demand of the Germans that they remember their crimes, but we cannot see our own.

On 10 September 1945 General Macarthur issued the first Civil Liberties Directive which ordered the Japanese government to impose standards of truthfulness upon the press and radio.

The Japanese papers did this, and started to criticise the American use of atomic bombs. On 21st September a ten-point 'press code' was issued which forbade any criticism of the Allies. That is what truthfulness means for the victor. That is what informs our history...

Can we remember the War as long as the subject of our stories is the Nation? It has been hard for the Germans to remember all that happened in the last war, because the sort of story which helps us to hold on to our identities is that of the nation-state.

And that is a story that simply cannot make sense of this obscenity. We may demand of them that they remember but what story are they to tell?

We too are still in the grip of just this story, of us in 'our finest hour' ...And so we cannot remember what we did at Dresden, at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, every night in raid after raid, in the unimaginable brutality of war.

We are like the disciples who could remember how it was the Romans and the Jews who killed Jesus, but it took them forty years to remember that it was they themselves who killed him too.

What we have to do is remember for the first time what we all did in the war, what humanity did to itself.

But to remember that we have to find ourselves one with others, not held in separation and otherness by nationalism.

It is only a story that gathers us together, as God forms one humanity out of his children, a story that re-members us, that will let us recall what we have done.

from *The Gift of Memory* by Timothy Radcliffe OP

Statement of Repentance

We remember with regret and apology, our failure to prevent past and present war. May we never remember with pride or celebration, but with sorrow and humble acknowledgement of the suffering we caused.

May we accept, study and address the political failures that lead to wars. May we see that the best way to honour the dead is to work as hard as we can to make sure our leaders do not add to their number.

We repent of our responsibility for the wars of humanity.

We honour the sacrifice of the many of every nation ‘made to achieve peace as an end to war’ and the suffering of all men, women and children, as well as all other life overtaken by these wars, and of the Earth herself.

And in honouring that sacrifice and suffering we renew our determination to make war a thing of the past, to establish peace throughout the world through international law, economic and social justice, and proper enforcement of human rights.

We pledge ourselves to support humanity’s search for peace. We join with those of all faiths and none, in their commitment to peace founded on compassion, and in trust and fearlessness of love.

Memory and Repentance

Both Christianity and Judaism are based on memory. The Passover liturgy is a remembrance of the liberation of God’s people from slavery in Egypt – it tells the story of their salvation.

It is a remembrance in the sense that the events of that liberation are acted out as if it was happening now, to us. Passover liturgies are readily available. If we as Christians take part in the Passover we need to remember that we (Western Christians) have little real memory of slavery – in fact we are or have been enslavers.

We also need to remember that we celebrate a fundamentally Jewish liturgy although one that has links with our own story through the Last Supper and the Eucharist.

The Passover for Christians must also recall the great letting of Jewish blood that has taken place in Christian Europe over the centuries, culminating in the Holocaust.

But although we are not slaves (although some Christians in our society do have real memories of captivity) we have also been liberated, we have a story of salvation that is acted out, made present, in the Eucharist.

So both Passover and Eucharist are two liturgies of remembrance that already exist.

An important component of both is repentance.

In the Passover liturgy wine is spilt to remind us that liberation from Egypt was bought at a price – to the Egyptians:

‘we have poured a bit of our glasses, since we cannot be completely joyful, our cups cannot be completely full, when the Egyptians, God’s creatures like ourselves, had to suffer.’

The recognition of the price that has been paid can be an important part of any Remembrance liturgy. The price of the exodus from Egypt, the price of our liberation from sin is paid for by blood and so we cannot be totally happy.

Much national remembrance talks of the price paid – lives lost and so on – but we must include the lives on every side, and the suffering caused to all, not just combatants. Therefore, in any service of remembrance there needs to be a penitential rite of some kind.

Act of Repentance

(This could be used with or without the gospel story of the woman found in adultery, John 8.1–11.)

Each member of the congregation has a stone as if they were the crowd in the story, ready to stone the woman.

After each prayer the response is said by all, and people are invited to come to the middle of the circle (or front if in church) and lay down their stones: a symbolic act of disarmament.

Reader: If we say now that we have no sin in us we are deceiving ourselves and refusing to admit the truth: let us begin our commemoration by acknowledging the times we have failed God and His chosen people. We have thought of God each day, taking delight in His word, as though we belonged to a nation of justice.

But we ignored the poor and sought only our own pleasure.

We placed our flags in your churches, sang hymns and gave thanks for our victories.

But we have killed the innocent and committed war crimes.

We have made a show of our good intentions.

But we spend our wealth not on bread for the hungry but on weapons of mass destruction.

We have declared peace and disowned aggression.

But by our plans we have hardened our hearts and are ready to destroy whole peoples in time of war. We still fashion our protection out of others' lives. Our security is based on the insecurity of others – yet we are all brothers and sisters in Christ.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

We lay down our stones of judgement in sorrow for our sin.

Have mercy on us, Lord.

Sorrow for the Wrongs of the Past – including Two Minutes Silence

Three readers go to stand by three candles or lamps that have been carried in previously. One is extinguished after each voice has spoken, and all three are relit after the absolution.

Jesus said: I give you a new commandment, that you should love one another as I have loved you.

Voice 1

For not being prepared for peace; for not being prepared for a new way

of living; for not being prepared for the arrival of love's realm;
(extinguish lamp or candle)

Forgive us; our lamps are faint.

Voice 2

For not being ready for God's work on earth; for not being ready to speak out when love calls; for not being ready to stand firm in the Gospel; *(extinguish lamp or candle)*

Forgive us; our lamps are fading.

Voice 3

For not making plans to destroy armaments; for not making plans to wipe out injustice; for not making plans to love our enemy;
(extinguish lamp or candle)

Forgive us; our light is running out.

Absolution

May almighty God have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
fill your souls with the possibility of heaven
and strengthen you with the oil of righteousness,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Let us now remember those who have given their lives to build a world of justice and peace.

Silence is kept for two minutes.

Light up the world with the new hope you have been given;
Make ready the world for the coming of Christ.

At this point the candles or lamps are relit one by one.

Litany of Reconciliation

‘All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.’
(*Romans 3.23*)

The hatred which divides nation from nation,
race from race, class from class,
Father, forgive.

The covetous desires of people and nations
to possess what is not their own,
Father, forgive.

The greed which exploits human labour and lays waste the earth,
Father, forgive.

Our envy of the welfare and happiness of others,
Father, forgive.

Our indifference to the plight of the homeless, the refugee, the asylum-seeker,
Father, forgive.

The lust which uses for ignoble ends the bodies of men, women and children,
Father, forgive.

The pride which leads us to trust in ourselves, and not in God,
Father, forgive.

‘Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.’ (*Ephesians 4.32*)
Amen.

Reflections & Readings

The Veteran's Lament

So here we stand again. A year has passed.
Once more our sorrow turns to millions killed.

What have we learned?
What do you say to us, dear soldier
from your eternal silence?

Do you implore us to improve our killing efficiency,
to make bigger and better bombs,
condemning millions more to your sad fate?

Do you cheer us on in our blindness?
How many thousands have we added to your number, this past year?
No - I hear you plead now. I hear you cry to us across the years:

*Weep not for me but for those yet unborn.
Go! – save your own children from my fate
Go! – thank me, by walking away today
to reject the futility, the waste, and the lie
that you have repeated over and over
even as you stand
for where do your billions go,
if not to ensure far more will know the hell I knew?
It is too late for me.
I have no voice but yours,
please - speak for me.
So, when you stand here again,
when this next year has passed,
come here in certainty
that you have taken some small step
along a different road...'*

Bill, World War Two veteran

The Two Mothers

This is a meditation on the Iraq war, but could refer to any two mothers and any conflict, anywhere, anytime...

I am an Iraqi mother. I was full of joy each time I had a child. But I have wept so many tears for them.

I lost my first son when he was sent to fight against Iran. He just never came back. We had a funeral, but there was no corpse.

I lost my first daughter when we went to war over Kuwait. She was with her school friends when there was an air raid. They took refuge in a deep shelter. It was hit and everyone was burned to death. They never found her body...

I lost my second son just a few days ago. He was killed defending Basra. They say he fought bravely – but I won't receive his body until after this war is over. Then we will have his funeral.

I am a devout Muslim. I ask Allah 'Why? Why?'

I hope no American or British mothers weep tears as I have done. I wish them no ill. I'm sure all mothers want their children to live in a peaceful world.

I am a British mother. It was such a joy when John was born. It was quite hard bringing him up, as my husband lost his job twice, but somehow we managed.

John was very good at sport at school, and he joined the Forces because he wanted plenty of sport and adventure. I don't think he ever thought much about killing anyone. He wasn't an aggressive sort of boy at all. In fact, in Kosovo, he mainly worked on reconstruction projects. He really enjoyed that.

I know he wasn't very happy about going to Iraq; he knew so many people were against it. But he said he would do his duty and his best as

always. We received the MOD special letter only two days ago. It seems he was killed in some kind of accident. They said there will be an official enquiry.

We've always tried to be a Christian family, and I won't stop going to church. But I keep asking God to help me make some sense of it all. I think of what those Iraqi mothers must be going through. I wish them no ill. Please God may it all be over soon. I'm sure all mothers want their children to live in a peaceful world.

Show Us the Way to Peace

Hiroshima,
Bosnia,
Belfast,
Dresden,
the names slip through our fingers
like bloodstained beads.

As we tell the story,
tell us,
tell us,
tell us,
the way
to peace.
Kosovo,
Nagasaki,
Nuremburg,
Afghanistan,
still they come, countless numbers:
People hounded, refugees tramping the road
out of hell, into hell.

Where will it stop?
Show us,
show us,
show us,
the way to peace.

Five for sorrow,
ten for joy,
May what has been sown in pain
be reaped in hope.

Kate McIlhagga

The House of Love

How can we live in the midst of a world marked by fear, hatred and violence, and not be destroyed by it? When Jesus prays for his disciples he responds to this question by saying, “I am not asking you to remove them from the world but to protect them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world any more than I belong to the world.”

To live in the world without belonging to the world summarises the essence of the spiritual life. The spiritual life keeps us aware that our true house is not the house of fear, in which the powers of hatred and violence rule, but the house of love, where God resides.

Hardly a day passes in our lives without our experience of inner or outer fears, anxieties, apprehensions and preoccupations.

These dark powers have pervaded every part of our world to such a degree that we can never fully escape them.

Still it is possible not to belong to these powers, not to build our dwelling place among them, but to choose the house of love as our home.

Henri Nouwen

We are Brothers!

Jean Goss, an international peacemaker, was invited to Lebanon during the civil war of the 80's, with Christian, Muslim and Druse militia fighting one another. He recalled the following personal experience told to him by a young Christian: ‘A young Druse soldier had to survey the wood-covered slope of a hill near their camp. I belonged at that time to a Christian militia and was ordered to investigate the Druse position. The Druse soldier discovered me and took me prisoner. He led me up the hill towards his camp. But as I was better trained than he, I was able to set myself free and take his gun, thus reversing the situation.

‘As I was walking with my prisoner, ready to kill him if he should try to

escape, I suddenly saw inside myself the image of Christ on the Cross. The passage from the Gospel, “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” resounded powerfully in my mind. It was with great urgency that I felt I had to follow the example of Jesus, and I decided to act. I threw down the gun and walked away, ready to be killed by my enemy who could pick it up and shoot at me. And as I walked I heard steps behind me. I did not turn around. Suddenly I felt the arm of the young Druse around my neck and with deep emotion heard him say to me: “You have spared my life. I also shall not kill you. We are brothers!”

‘We separated, each one walking back to his camp. Later on I found out that he had been executed for not obeying the orders he had received. I left the militia and I refused ever to return to it.’

Hildegard Goss-Mayr, widow of Jean Goss

Christian ‘Heroes and Heroines’

The Christian story, like the national story, involves people as well as events. It also has its heroes and heroines - the saints and martyrs. Different religious traditions hold different views about the role of these people now; however they can be an example to us and can be incorporated into an ecumenical celebration. Many saints have stories relating directly to peace and justice – as St Martin of Tours below – also St Francis of Assisi and Hugh of Lincoln. More recent figures include Martin Luther King, Franz Jagerstatter and Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

St Martin of Tours, November 11th

Martin, the son of an officer in the Roman army, was forced into the army against his will. While stationed in Amiens, Gaul, he met at the gate of the city a poor man, almost naked, begging for alms. So drawing his sword he cut his cloak in half and gave one half to the beggar. Our word ‘chapel’ is said to derive from this – for it comes from the word for a small cloak in Old French – *chapele*.

Martin then had a dream in which Christ appeared dressed in half the garment that Martin had given away. Jesus said ‘Martin, yet a cataphumen, has covered me with his cloak.’ Martin immediately went to be baptised.

Some time later the barbarians invaded Gaul. With his comrades he

appeared before Julian Caesar to receive a war-bounty, and Martin refused to accept it. 'Hitherto' he said to Julian, 'I have served you as a soldier; let me now serve Christ. Give the bounty to these others who are going to fight; but I am a soldier of Christ and it is not lawful for me to fight.' He was imprisoned, but released when the armistice was signed. He was ordained a deacon and then returned to his home in Italy.

He was made Bishop of Tours in 371 and lived as a monk in a cell near the church and later in the abbey of Marmoutier. When a tyrannical imperial officer came to Tours with a batch of prisoners in order to torture them and put them to death, Martin interceded on their behalf. The prisoners were not the only ones to receive Martin's plea of mercy. He also opposed the persecution of heretics believing that excommunication was sufficient punishment. Like other saints he gave friendship and love to lepers, society's outcasts. It was said of him that he healed lepers with his kiss. He died on November 8th 397 and was buried in Tours on November 11th which is his feast day.

Suggested Bible Readings:

Deuteronomy 30.15	Choose life not death
Psalms 34.13-15	Seek peace and pursue it
Psalms 46	God calls upon the nations to stop their fighting (especially in the Good News Bible)
Isaiah 65.17-25	God's vision of peace
Joel 2.12-18	A call to repentance
Zechariah 9.9-10	God coming to reign justly
Hosea 10.13-15	The result of trusting weapons not God
Micah 4.1-5	An Old Testament prophet speaks of the Lord's universal reign of peace

Matthew 5.1-16	The Beatitudes
Matthew 25.3-46	Judgement of nations
Luke 6.27-38	Love your enemies
Luke 19.28-44	Jesus weeps over Jerusalem
John 14.25-31	The promise of peace
2 Corinthians 5.14-21	Reconciliation
Ephesians 2.13-22	Christ is our peace
Colossians 1.11-23	Reconciliation
James 3.13-18	Wisdom and right conduct will lead to peace
I Peter 2.18-25	Peter writes about the example of Christ's sufferings and applies this even to difficult situations in which Christians may find themselves
Revelation 18	Doom of corrupt systems
Revelation 21.1-6, 22.1-5	A new heaven and a new earth

Prayer & Intercession

Remembrance Prayer 1

Jesus, as you asked us to, we remember you in the Eucharist.
You are the pattern of generosity and sacrifice,
you are the sacrifice itself.

Help us to remember the dead. Help us to remember properly:
the volunteers, the idealists, the dutiful;
the cheerful, the brave and the good;
the heroes and the unfortunates as well.

Help us to remember the terrible slaughter in war
of young men and children and women and the old.
Help us to remember and care for all widows and orphans
as the Father commands us to do.

Help us to remember the injustices of governments and of all
nationalities, and the victimisation of people of all countries.

Help us to remember that we make wars while you offer peace.
Help us to choose life-giving, not life-destroying
means of resolving conflict.

Help us to choose your peace and justice
rather than trying ourselves to judge and to punish
our brothers and sisters in other countries.

For we are all your sisters and brothers,
and children of your Father in heaven. Amen.

Oliver Bernard

Remembrance Prayer 2

In remembrance of those –
throughout time, all over the world –
who have died in war or because of war,

we pray urgently today
that children, women and men
may become makers of peace.

We pray for children growing up
in violent surroundings
or thinking, talking and playing in warlike ways.
God, give to our people a new challenge,
new ways in which to test their strength
in sharing power and risking non-violence.

We pray for women who are silent
while their male partners engage
in any part of the business of war.
God, give to your people a new courage
to question accepted dogma,
and dream about the things that make for peace.

We pray for men brought up to believe
that might is manly – and for men who think otherwise
and so are labelled cowardly or weak.
God, give to your people a new determination
to struggle for justice and peace
instead of for ‘extra shares’ and superiority.

O God we pray for:
new awareness of the battlefield within us,
new ways of challenging aggressive instincts,
new thought-patterns, language and ideas,
new appreciation of the world as one community,
new methods of dialogue and negotiation,
new attempts to befriend those different from ourselves,
new readiness to forgive and reconcile,
new visions, new love, new hope...
and a new faith that the peace that passes understanding
can reach out from within us to embrace the world.

Kate Compston

Jesus Our Peace

Jesus, you are our peace:

In you we become new, one single humanity.

Come among us with your gift of peace:

**Not as the world gives, in fear and suspicion,
but as you give, in love and truth.**

Come among us and banish the weapons of war:

**Speak peaceably to every nation, that your rule may extend
from sea to sea, to the ends of the earth.**

Come among us with the new covenant of love:

**Sweep off the earth the instruments of destruction
that all living creatures may lie down without fear.**

Come among us with good news for the poor:

**With release for the captives and prisoners,
with sight for the blind, with deliverance for the oppressed,
with the fair distribution of the resources of your world.**

Come among us that we may hunger and thirst
to see right prevail:

That we may show mercy, that we may be peacemakers.

You are our peace.

You are the way,

You are the truth,

You are the life.

**Fill our lives with your spirit
of love, joy and peace. Amen.**

John Ferguson

For Peacemakers

Continually remind us, Lord, that it is not peace lovers who are blessed but peacemakers. Shape our lives into an expression of our faith, so that others can see the correspondence between the meaning of the life we have found and the style of life we lead.

Help us not to spoil it by considering certain areas as immune to your touch, thus regarding you as not quite the total truth.

Protect us from cultural forces which seek to conform us to an image other than yours – which seek to destroy our distinctiveness.

Show us the harm we do when we water down the gospel, when we become a mirror reflecting the world's brokenness and hate rather than a window through which your wholeness and love can shine.

Andrew Farlow

Prayer of Commitment

You came into this world to bring true peace – a right relationship between all people and God, between individuals and between nations.

**Lord, you are the Prince of Peace,
you are the light of the world.**

In you alone can we find peace and in the doing of your will is our peace. Grant us your peace in our hearts and may this peace go out from us to touch others. May we be true peacemakers.

**Lord, you are the Prince of Peace,
you are the light of the world.**

Give us the strength to renounce our material comforts and securities. May there be a fair distribution and use of all resources. May there be justice and freedom from discrimination for all peoples.

**Lord, you are the Prince of Peace,
you are the light of the world.**

Prayers for All

Into paradise may the angels lead thee:
at thy coming may the martyrs receive thee,
and bring thee into the holy city Jerusalem.
May the choir of angels receive thee,
and with Lazarus, once poor,
mayest thou have eternal rest.
Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord;
and let light perpetual shine upon them.
May they rest in peace. Amen. (Requiem Mass)

O God our Maker and Redeemer, with much sadness we remember those who have given their lives in the conviction that such was necessary for the protection and well-being of others. Lord Jesus Christ, even now bless with your Holy Spirit those people who are working for reconciliation between enemies, and protect all who put their lives at risk in an attempt to resolve conflict without violence.

We remember with sadness all whose lives have been lost due to war, or who still suffer because of war. It is estimated that 130 million people have been killed or injured in conflicts since 1945. We know that true, lasting peace comes not through violence or war, nor simply from the absence of war, but when people return to God and learn to live carefully, respectfully, and fairly.

Prayers for Peace

Creator God, you sustain all that is whole.
We gather to worship you in the midst of a broken world.
Overshadowed by violence and war, poverty and injustice,
fear and suspicion, we pray for guidance and clarity so that we may
be true peacemakers. Be with us and cast your light on our work.
Amen.

Father, when the nations seek peace
they make their treaties and alliances.
There is peace of a kind
but it is still subject to betrayals and denials;

there is still a lack of brotherhood and love.
But your peace draws people together with their neighbours.
Your peace makes us one with you.
Your peace is sacrificial love
which recognises the good in all people,
stands out against injustice and oppression,
and frees the people
to realise their full potential.
Your peace is holiness;
it is wholeness and salvation.
May we find our peace through Christ.
Amen.

John Johansen-Berg

Give us courage, Lord, to stand up and be counted,
to stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves,
to stand up for ourselves when it is needful for us to do so.
Let us fear nothing more than we fear you,
let us love nothing more than we love you,
for thus we shall fear nothing also.
Let us have no other God before you,
whether nation or party or state or church.
Let us seek no other peace but the peace which is yours
and make us its instruments,
opening our eyes and our ears and our hearts,
so that we should know always
what work of peace we should do for you.

Alan Paton

For Victims of War Today

O God, compassionate and merciful
Where your children tear each other
you also are torn.
Full of confusion, longing for peace
we bring you our world,
threatened by violence
and enslaved by greed;

Where the powerful can defend their interests
and the poor are trampled.
Open our hearts and minds to your will,
and show us how to pray.

We pray for those whose lives are lost and broken,
who pay the price when reason's voice is stilled,
across the world their cries come sharply to us;
imprisoned, tortured, starving, bound and killed.
We know, like them, of evil's dark oppression;
we live, like them, through hope which God instilled.

Where power and terror stand in domination;
where greed dictates the value life can hold,
the young, the strong, who shape a better future
into the jails of tyranny are hurled.
Their faith refired the cause of liberation;
their tears unite the weak throughout the world.

Their struggle points the way to love and justice;
their battles quell what evil can arrange.
Their anguish shows the depth of crucifixion;
their strength reveals the power we can attain.
God sides with them, the poor and the abandoned;
God lives in them, the hope for peace and change.

Vaughan Jones

Prayer for Peace and Justice

O God, the heavens are yours and the earth is yours.
All lives belong to you.

Make us your messengers of peace and justice.

O God, your kingdom come and your will be done on earth,
as in heaven.

Make us your messengers of peace and justice.

O God, may all injustice, violence, and oppression give way to fairness, mercy and goodwill.

Make us messengers of your peace and justice.

Teach us to use the manifold resources of the earth so that none may waste and none may want.

Make us messengers of your peace and justice.

Through our labours, may co-operation triumph over conflict; may all people find their reward in that which works for the good of all.

Make us messengers of your peace and justice.

Keep alive the holy fire within the hearts of all who dare to be the voice of unwelcome wisdom. Make us willing to hear hard demands.

Make us messengers of your peace and justice.

Fill us with a passion for righteousness and a zeal to serve where there is need. Fill us with a purpose that is holy and right and just.

Teach us to love the noblest and best.

Make us messengers of your peace and justice.

O God, be all might and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen.

Renewal of Commitment to Peacemaking

Gracious Father, we pray for peace in our world;

for all national leaders that they may have wisdom to know and courage to do what is right;

For all men and women that our hearts may be turned to You in the search for righteousness and truth;

For those who are working to improve international relationships, that they may find the true way of reconciliation.

For those who suffer as a result of war;

the injured and disabled,

the mentally distressed,

the homeless and hungry,

those who mourn their dead,

and especially for those who are without hope or friend to sustain them in their grief.

Working for Peace—Two Affirmations

God Loves This World

An Affirmation of Faith

We believe God made this world,
God loves this world,
God lives in this world.

We believe God holds it and cradles it in loving hands:
holding its pain,
caring for every memory
of every person in conflict.

We believe God loves each human being,
on every side of every struggle.
We believe God forgives all who repent
of causing injury or death,
in the struggle for peace.

We believe violence breaks God's heart;
bullets and bombs tear through God's realm;
and war opposes God's love.

But we believe love lives longer than hatred;
hope burns away at despair;
God calls to us from the violence,
and we can work in love for a better world.
So be it.

Community Affirmation

All say together:

We who stand here in sorrow for the victims of all violence today declare our hope in the future.

We have come to renew our belief in the holiness of the earth, and the sanctity of all life.

We declare we are at peace with all people of goodwill.

We need no leader to define for us any enemy, nor to tell us what we need security for and defence against.

Instead,
we affirm that our earth's security rests not in armaments but:
in the justice of adequate housing and food,
in the justice of meaningful education and work,
in the justice of an economic order that gives everyone access to our earth's abundance,
in the justice of human relationships, nourished by co-operation,
in the justice of safe, clean water and renewable energy.

We affirm people over property, community well-being over private satisfaction, and respect for others regardless of race, sex, class or religion.

We unite ourselves with sisters and brothers the world over, to join together in communities of resistance to all violence. Bombs cannot dissolve hatred, but justice and love can overcome the machines of destruction. Before us today are set life and death.

We choose life, that we and the world's children may live.

Let it be so.

Poetry, Hymns & Songs

Remorse

Once I was a soldier
And was taught to use a gun:
And then was sent to war
To kill some mother's son.

I had no hate at all.
I'd joined up like the others;
Answ'ring my country's call
In arms we all were brothers.

Now that I am older
And feel the menace of time,
I wonder if killing
Is heroic or a crime.

Sometimes I see that boy,
His young face begrimed with dirt;
A hole between his eyes
And blood trickling down his shirt.

He knew he had to die.
His bright eyes were on my gun.
He did not ask me why,
That poor little mother's son.

In my dreams I hear her;
A mother without a son.
I'd committed murder
Of her most cherished one.

I cannot wash my hands
As Pilate did that day;
Or travel far like Cain,
Or, like Judas, spurn my pay.

I pray that mother's son
With thee evermore may live.
Give me His crown of thorns,
And, if thou can'st, forgive.

Walter Goldsby, a horseman in the first World War

Parable of the Old Man and the Young Man

So Abram rose, and clave the wood, and went,
And took the fire with him, and a knife.
And as they sojourned both of them together,
Isaac the first-born spake and said, My father,
Behold the preparations, fire and iron,
But where the lamb for this burnt-offering?
Then Abram bound the youth, with belts and straps,
And builded parapets and trenches there,
And stretched forth the knife to slay his son.
When lo! An angel called him out of heav'n,
Saying, Lay not your hand upon the lad,
Neither do anything to him. Behold,
A ram, caught in a thicket by its horns;
offer the Ram of Pride instead of him.
But the old man would not so, but slew his son –
And half the seed of Europe, one by one.

Wilfred Owen

Dulce et Decorum est

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues, -
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est
Pro patria mori.

Wilfred Owen

Glory of Women

You love us when we're heroes, home on leave,
Or wounded in a mentionable place.
You worship decorations; you believe
That chivalry redeems the war's disgrace.
You make us shells. You listen with delight,
By tales of dirt and danger fondly thrilled.
You crown our distant ardours while we fight,
And mourn our laurelled memories when we're killed.
You can't believe that British troops 'retire'
When hell's last horror breaks them, and they run,
Trampling the terrible corpses – blind with blood.
O German mother dreaming by the fire,
While you are knitting socks to send your son
His face is trodden deeper in the mud.

Siegfried Sassoon

Vietnam War

God damn the hands of glory
that hold the bloody fire brand high.
Close the book and end the story
of how so many men have died.
Let the world retain in memory
that mighty tongues tell mighty lies.
And if mankind must have an enemy
let it be his warlike pride.
And if mankind must have an enemy
let it be his warlike pride.

Bruce Cockburn

Men against Men

'It was Sam's first view of a battle of
men against men,
and he did not like it much.
He was glad that he could not
see the dead face.
He wondered what the man's name
was and where he came from;
and if he was really evil of heart,
or what lies or threats had led him
on the long march from his home;
and if he would not really rather
have stayed there in peace.'

Sam, speaking in the chapter titled *Of Herbs and Stewed Rabbit*,
from *The Two Towers* by J R R Tolkien

For the Healing of the Nations

For the healing of the nations,
Lord we pray with one accord,
For a just and equal sharing
Of the things that earth affords.
To a life of love in action
Help us rise and pledge our word.

Lead us, Father, into freedom.,
From despair your world release:
That, redeemed from war and hatred,
We may come and go in peace.
Show us how through care and goodness
Fear will die and hope increase.

You, Creator God, have written
Your great name on humankind:
For our growing in your likeness;
Bring the life of Christ in mind:
That by our response and service,
Earth its destiny may find.

Fred Kaan (to the tune of Picardy)

If the War Goes On

If the war goes on
and the children die of hunger
and the old men cry
for the young men are no more
and the women learn
how to dance without a partner
who will keep the score?

If the war goes on
and the truth is taken hostage
and new horrors lead
to the need to euphemise
when the calls for peace
are condemned unpatriotic
who'll expose the lies?

If the war goes on
and the daily bread is terror
and the voiceless poor
take the road as refugees
when a nation's pride
destines millions to be homeless
who will heed their plea?

If the war goes on
and the rich increase their fortunes
and the arms sales soar
through new weaponry displayed
when a fertile field
turns to no-man's land tomorrow
who'll approve such trade?

If the war goes on
will we close the doors to heaven?
If the war goes on
will we breach the gates of hell?
If the war goes on
will we ever be forgiven?
If the war goes on.....

John L. Bell and Graham Maule
(music available from Wild Goose Publications)

If What They Mean by Peace...

Say 'no' to peace
if what they mean by peace
is the quiet misery of hunger,
the frozen stillness of fear,
the silence of broken spirits,
the unborn hopes of the oppressed.

Tell them that peace
is the shouting of children at play,
the babble of tongues set free,
the thunder of dancing feet,
and a father's voice singing.

Say 'no' to peace
if what they mean by peace
is a rampart of gleaming missiles,
the arming of distant wars,
money at ease in its castle
and grateful poor at the gate.

Tell them that peace
is the hauling down of flags,
the forging of guns into ploughs,
the giving of fields to the landless,
and hunger a fading dream.

Brian Wren (music available from Stainer & Bell)

Make Me a Channel of your Peace

Make me a channel of Your peace,
Where there is hatred let me bring Your love;
where there is injury, Your pardon, Lord;
and where there's doubt, true faith in You.

*O Master, grant that I may never seek
so much to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved, as to love with all my soul.*

Make me a channel of Your peace,
Where there's despair in life let me bring hope;
where there is darkness, only light;
and where there's sadness, ever joy.

O Master, grant that I may never seek...

Make me a channel of Your peace,
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
in giving of ourselves that we receive;
and in dying that we're born to eternal life.

Sebastian Temple

Turn Our Hands to Peace

They marched away to war
With hearts and courage high
In heady days when no-one dreamed
How many lads would die;
Obeyed their country's call
To fight the evil ones,
Then faced young men just like themselves
Behind the German guns.

*So now it's time to nail the lies,
To give the truth release,
To see the wars for what they were
And turn our hearts to peace.
The past should make us wise,
Our work and will increase
To see the wars for what they are
And turn our hands to peace.*

The Armistice was signed
And poppies graced the field,
But poverty and bigotry
Left old wounds still unhealed.
How could they be so blind
Who raised the Fascist cause,
Another generation set
On course for other wars?

So now it's time...

Each year our heads are bowed,
The gallant dead are named.
Of them we may be justly proud,
But we should be ashamed.
If they could see today
The kind of wars we've made,
With half the corpses children now
They'd know themselves betrayed.

So now it's time...

Sue Gilmurray

(Music available from: Sue Gilmurray, 1 Wilford Drive, Ely,
Cambridgeshire. CB6 1TL)

Peacemaking in the 21st Century

Three Reflections

The world stands at a dangerous place at the beginning of the 21st century. The spiral of violence breeding insecurity breeding yet more violence, threatens to continue unchecked. Lanza del Vasto has written:

Intentions, of course, are always good. The worse the fight, the higher its justification. 'Justified' violence is the worst. Unjustified violence bursts out of a bad character or bad feelings, but it doesn't go very far. But when people feel justified in the use of violence, it becomes systematic and leads to all the horrors of history.'

The emerging agendas of peacemakers in the 21st century need to lead us away from the self-justification which breeds violence and works against dialogue and growing understanding. The emerging agendas of peacemakers in the 21st century need to invite the 'other' into community rather than exclude, to promote participation against cynicism, to strengthen the forces of co-operation against that which divides.

Liz Griffiths

Terrorism has no military solution – instead of doctoring mere outer symptoms, let's commit to causal therapy of the social and political roots of terrorism. This means concretely that when everywhere billions are now being made available for military and police measures, corresponding sums should be devoted to improving the social situation of the masses, who are the losers in the process of globalisation and who thus take refuge in fundamentalist groups.

Dr Hans Kung, Director of Global Ethics Foundation, Germany

I have great respect for those who have gone to war in what they believed were just causes, even in cases where I would not have followed them. I also have great respect for those who conscientiously objected to participating in those wars, even in cases where I would not have joined them. Such people committed themselves, risking their lives, for what

they judged to be right. People always have and always will make such commitments. At the level of the individual, this is the drama of human life. At the level of universal theory, however, if we want to be honest, we must be modest. There is no way we can know what God might know. The other is always a mystery to us and any assumption that the other is an 'unmitigated evil' is reckless. People, ourselves included, are complex and full of unknown elements. There may be just wars, but they are probably few and far between, and we would do well to cultivate a pronounced reticence before asserting that any particular war falls into such a category. Even when war has been fought or victory attained, there will be grieving and the victor should never be haughty.

Dharmavidya, Head of the Buddhist House, Narborough,
Leicestershire

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Men against Men

Passage from *The Two Towers*, by J R R Tolkien © George Allen & Unwin (Publishers) Ltd 1955, 1966

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