

Homily
Remembrance Sunday
November 13, 2022
Church of the Ascension, Ottawa
The Reverend Victoria Scott

Readings: [Wisdom of Solomon 3:1-9](#); [Canticle: 1 Samuel 2:1-10](#); [1 Peter 1:3-9](#);
[John 6:37- 40](#)

November 11 and today, Remembrance Sunday. These are days of remembering. We remember those who died for our freedom. We remember those who continue to suffer the consequences of war. Many of you will have a personal memory of how war has touched your lives. Some of you have a direct experience of war. For me, it is an inherited memory: my grandfather was badly wounded in World War II and this impacted the rest of his life. My uncle was 5 years old in 1939, and he was evacuated out of London, as were my grandmother and my father, who was just a baby at the time.

When we remember, we are not remembering distant characters in a story. We are remembering children, siblings, parents. We are remembering lives and relationships forever changed by conflict and violence.

An analogy I return to again and again when reflecting on lives and relationships is that of a tapestry. The tapestry is the “fabric of our lives”. Our lives, those we love, and indeed all our relationships and interactions are threads and colours and textures in this fabric of life. Remembrance Day asks us to stop and look at the fabric of our lives. The tapestry of life here in Canada would not look as it does today were it not for the courage and sacrifice of those who gave their lives for our freedom. I am so grateful for that. A tapestry shaped by the forces of Nazi Germany, for example, is unthinkable.

This analogy of tapestry and weaving invites us to see all of life as interconnected. Everything we do in this earthly life is woven into this fabric of life. The threads of those who have gone before us are woven into that great tapestry, and the weaving will continue after we are gone. The tapestry is past, present, and future.

In our first reading today, from the book of Wisdom, we hear that the souls of righteous are in the hand of God, and that they are at peace. Another part of the analogy of the tapestry – the fabric of life – is that while we dwell in this earthly realm, we see the underside of it. It is still beautiful, but we see the joins and knots, and tangles. We look at the underside of the fabric of life, but God is looking at the front of that tapestry where all its colour and beauty are revealed in blessed fullness. Those who have gone before us also see the front of the tapestry, as they are held in God’s hand.

Parts of this Gospel passage can create a jumble of knots in our hearts and minds if we’re not careful with the threads we pick up in it. These words:

“...that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day...” cause unhelpful tangles in our life’s tapestry when we understand them in a “who’s in/who’s out/who is getting into heaven, who’s not” kind of way. Eugene Peterson’s “The Message” translation of this passage does some detangling:

“This is what my Father wants: that anyone who sees the Son and trusts who he is and what he does and then aligns with him will enter real life, eternal life. My part is to put them on their feet alive and whole at the completion of time.”

Alive, and whole at the completion of time. Those who trust who Jesus is and what he does enter real life and find wholeness. Are we weaving into our lives the threads that God showed us, in Jesus’s life? Are we trusting that Jesus’s way of living – a way of solidarity, of love, of connection – is how we are to live, today, and every day?

Richard Rohr says this about wholeness:

“We live wholeness when we re-member our story and, through it, experience a deeper sense of being part of a greater whole. We live wholeness when we know we belong—to people, to a place, to a community and tribe, to earth, to God (however named), and to the cosmos. . . We live wholeness when we know that what we already have is enough and that all we need is to be resourceful with it.”

Weaving the fabric of life is about connection and wholeness, and we are the weavers! On days like today, we give thanks for the weaving that the generations before us did, and we are reminded that we are to weave with love, and wholeness in mind, always. We are reminded to ask ourselves if in our lives, in our actions, we weave threads of war or threads of peace. Are we weaving with threads of conflict, or with threads of unity? When the weaving of life goes on after we are gone, will this generation of the tapestry look like justice or injustice?

Remembrance Day is a day when we consider peace. Pacifism – with a “c” – means “peaceloving”. God does call us to be lovers of peace. This can’t be mistaken for “passivism” with meaning the acceptance of suffering brought about by injustice. It can’t be mistaken for the passivism that doesn’t resist evil. If we are to truly be peace lovers we must be activists, working for peace, and working for wholeness.

We must pick up threads of justice, unity, and peace – the threads of healing and wholeness – and weave them so firmly into the fabric of our lives that they can’t unravel. We must pick up threads in the lives of the vulnerable, and the oppressed and remake the fabric of their lives, weaving healing and wholeness in places where the fabric of lives is torn and stained by brokenness, in places where lives have come undone. Sometimes the weaving of justice and unity and peace require both weaving and unweaving. Sometimes the joins and knots must be undone and redone.

Where are the rips and tears in your life’s tapestry? When we gather together there is an opportunity for repair. Feel God’s love at work in you, weaving wholeness in you as we sing and pray and share in the Eucharist together. Feel it, let it saturate the whole of your being, so that you can go and weave healing and wholeness in the world.

May our world grow into a deeper understanding of the connections in humanity, in life, in our world. May each of us find ways to weave the threads of unity, peace, and justice – the threads of healing and wholeness – firmly, beautifully, into the fabric of life now, today and every day. In Jesus name. Amen.