

HARVEST AND REMEMBRANCE

W. Gerald Jones, Kirkmichael, submits a meditation for Harvest and liturgical material suitable for use in Remembrance services.

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A HARVEST MEDITATION.

We plough the fields and scatter
The good seed on the land.

At this season, those beautiful words, immortalised in the celebrated hymn of Matthias Claudius, are fresh upon our lips as we commemorate that important landmark in the Christian and agricultural calendar, when we gather together to praise God for His infinite goodness in "giving us each day, our daily bread". Indeed, throughout the country, Churches great and small are ablaze with the ripefruits of the harvest - the corn, fresh from the thresher's hand; the fruit, fresh from the fruiterer's stall; and the flowers, fresh from the nursery or garden; while humble tables groan under the weight of samples from the supermarket, admirably represented in packets of Typhoo Tea and tins of Heinz Baked Beans.

If we think about it carefully, however, each of us can use our God-given gifts to help create a harvest every day. As Christians, we are the specially chosen seed whom our Father - the Divine Farmer - wishes to be scattered throughout our community, our country and our world, to bring forth a rich harvest of faith, of hope, of love and of joy.

Let us then see this Harvest Season as a ripe opportunity for putting our own hands resolutely to the plough, for God has placed us in this field we call a world. In some places, the soil is fertile and enriched by Christian nurture; in others, the ground is fallow and barren, where the Word of Grace is choked in the weeds of indifference and hostility; and in other parts, we encounter rocky ground, where there are simply hearers of the Word, but not "doers of spiritual truth".

Reminded of our Master's teaching that we cannot live by bread alone, let us ensure that we are constantly "fed and watered by God's almighty hand", so that we, who are the seed which grows by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, may scatter ourselves as good seed on the land, and in so doing, bring forth the ripe fruits of the Christian life, here, there, and everywhere, both now and always.

PART ORDER OF SERVICE FOR REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY.

Greeting: May grace, mercy and peace from God the Father,
 God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, be with us all.

AMEN

Preamble: We are gathered together this morning, in fellowship with our family throughout the British Commonwealth, to glorify God for His tender mercies toward us; and to unite our hearts in respectful and loving remembrance of all who gave their lives in the service of their country in two World Wars, whose personal sacrifice won for us those precious liberties we now freely enjoy. As Jesus Christ our Lord laid down His Life that we might be reconciled to God, so we pray through faith in His eternal sacrifice, that man may henceforth be reconciled to man in that perfect Kingdom, where no sword is drawn save the sword of righteousness, and no strength known save the strength of love, and that the whole world may acknowledge Christ as Lord and King.

Call to worship: LET US WORSHIP GOD

Opening praise: HYMN 611: "O God, our help in ages past".

Call to prayer: The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no evil touch them.
 Their bodies are buried in peace; but their name liveth for evermore.
 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

LET US PRAY

Adoration: Almighty and eternal God, our help in ages past and our hope for years to come: we praise Thee for Thy power by which we were created, Thy love by which we are redeemed, and for Thy dear Son who laid down His life on a Cross for His friends, and whose will is our peace.
 O Thou, who hast called us forth to hunger and thirst after righteousness: remembering those who have lived and died in Thy service, and in the service of all mankind, we praise Thee for all Thy loving-kindness, and with heart, soul and voice glorify Thy sacred name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN

Confession:

O Lord, who knowest our thoughts from afar off: we humbly confess that we can never deserve Thy heavenly blessings, and that we have proved unworthy of the sufferings endured in our defence, and of the countless lives laid down on our behalf; still less, O Lord, are we worthy of the sacrifice of Thy only Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

AMEN

O Holy Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world; grant unto us the assurance of Thy pardon, and restore us to the joy of the forgiven; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

AMEN

Supplication:

O God, who alone canst bring good out of evil and makest the wrath of man to turn to Thy praise, who by Thy spirit canst turn the wilderness of war into the Garden of the Lord; teach us to live together in perfect charity, and unite us all in firmer fellowship with one another, for the advancement of Thy glory, and for the coming of Thy Kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who ever liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end.

AMEN

Our Father.....

Act of Remembrance:

As the 11th hour now approaches on this day of National Remembrance, let us now pay tribute to all who made the Supreme Sacrifice, remembering especially in our hearts those of this City (Town/Village) and Congregation whose names live for evermore.

SILENCE

They shall grow not 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.

In memory of those who made the Supreme Sacrifice, O God, make us better men and women, and give us peace in our time; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

AMEN