

# A SERVICE OF THE WORD FOR A COMMEMORATION OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR IN A LOCAL CHURCH

## **Remembering World War I:**

The number of events to commemorate multiplies for the years 2014-2018. Understandably, much of the attention is going to focus on the centenary of the landings at Suvla Bay and the Gallipoli Campaign, between 25 April 1915 and 9 January 1916, and on the Battle of the Somme, which was fought 1 July and 18 November 1916.

A conservative estimate says nearly 4,000 Irish troops died in the 1915 Gallipoli campaign, but the figure is probably much higher.

On the first day of the Battle of the Somme, the 5,500 casualties of the 36th Ulster Division on 1 July were men drawn almost entirely from one community in Ulster. Nearly 2,000 soldiers from cities, towns, villages and townlands in Northern Ireland were killed in the first few hours of fighting.

In a continuation of the same battle, the 16th Irish Division had 4,330 casualties in September, of whom 1,200 were killed. These came mainly from the other three provinces. In addition, many more Irish soldiers fought in other divisions of the regular army or in the newly-raised battalions. The total number of Irish casualties cannot be calculated with certainty but they affected every part of the island and continue to influence the evolution of Irish politics.

The Battle of the Somme is an important but often politicised commemoration in Northern Ireland, yet in both campaigns men from both parts of the island and from both traditions fought side-by-side suffered together, and sustained, encouraged and cared for each other.

Many of the stories from both campaigns remain untold. The majority of the Irish regiments, not all based on this island, have been disbanded, and the loss of continuity means the loss of story-telling. In addition, the changing political climate in Southern Ireland meant former soldiers and families felt they were forced into silence. Those who had gone out in bravery and thought they were returning home as heroes, now found their stories could not be told, and feared being marginalised as 'traitors.' Heroism and bravery were forgotten, and those who suffered, both former soldiers and their families, often suffered in silence. In the new Irish Free State, even the promise of secure jobs for returning soldiers often disappeared.

In giving voice to the silenced generation, the Church must give voice to their suffering, their untold stories, their bravery and heroism. Perhaps they answered the call from Redmond to fight for the freedom of small nations; perhaps they hoped their decision would bring financial security and employment for their family and for future generations. How we design and structure our commemorations can restore these hopes and give new hope for the security they sought for future generations.

Confession and thanksgiving, in the proper proportions and in creative tension and balance, can help achieve this.

**PATRICK COMERFORD**

## Preparation

### GREETING

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Thanks be to God.**

*or*

We meet in the presence of God  
who knows our needs,  
hears our cries,  
feels our pain,  
and heals our wounds.

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

### SENTENCES OF SCRIPTURE

God is our refuge and strength;  
a very present help in trouble. Psalm 46.1

I lift up my eyes to the hills –  
from whence will my help come?  
My help comes from the Lord,  
Who made heaven and earth. Psalm 121.1-2

This I call to mind,  
and therefore I have hope:  
the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases,  
his mercies never come to an end;  
they are new every morning. Lamentations 3.21-23

Those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength,  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,  
they shall run and not be weary  
they shall walk and not faint. Isaiah 40.31

What does the Lord require of you  
but to do justice, and to love kindness,  
and to walk humbly with your God? Micah 6.8

HYMN

BIDDING

Brothers and Sisters,  
as we continue to commemorate the hundredth  
anniversary of the first world war,  
we come together to offer to almighty God  
our worship and praise and thanksgiving  
to draw near to the throne of God  
in penitence and humility;  
to hear his proclamation of justice and righteousness  
to remember those who participated  
in the war from our parish/town.  
to pray for all those who continue to serve  
in our armed/defence forces.  
And to pray that in the power of his spirit  
we may serve him in the pursuit of his heavenly realm.

*Or*

Almighty God,  
you call us into a common fellowship  
of solidarity and love;  
draw near to us as we commemorate  
those who died in the First World War.  
As we reflect on their sacrifice and the horrors of conflict,  
may you move us to always work for peace  
and justice in our broken world;  
this we ask through the Prince of Peace,  
Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

## **Penitence**

The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart God will not despise.  
Let us come to the Lord, who is full of compassion,  
and acknowledge our transgressions in penitence and faith.

Lord God,  
you sent your Son to reconcile us to yourself  
and to one another.

Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus,  
you heal the wounds of sin and division.

Christ, have mercy.

**Christ, have mercy.**

Holy Spirit,  
through you we put to death the sins of the body – and live.

Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For boundless love of self,  
and for failing to walk with humility and gentleness:

Lord in your mercy

**Forgive our sin**

For longing to have what is not ours,  
and for hearts that are not at rest with ourselves:

Lord in your mercy

**Forgive our sin**

For misuse of human relationships,  
and for unwillingness to see the image of God in others:

Lord in your mercy

**Forgive our sin**

For jealousies that divide families and nations,  
and for rivalries that create strife and warfare:

Lord in your mercy

**Forgive our sin**

For inequity in sharing the gifts of God,  
and for carelessness with the fruits of creation:

Lord in your mercy

**Forgive our sin**

For hurtful words that condemn and angry deeds that  
harm:

Lord in your mercy

**Forgive our sin**

For idleness in witnessing to Jesus Christ,  
and for squandering the gifts of love and grace:

Lord in your mercy  
**Forgive our sin**

*The priest pronounces this absolution.*

Almighty God,  
who forgives all who truly repent,  
Have mercy on you,  
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,  
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,  
and keep you in eternal life;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*The Beatitudes (BCP pages 223-224) may also be used*

ACT OF COMMEMORATION

*The Names inscribed on the memorial may be audibly read aloud.*

*Those wishing to do so come forward to lay wreaths, light candles, or offer other symbols of remembrance and hope, such as single flowers or crosses.*

*This may take place at this point or following the Ministry of the Word.*

THE SILENCE

PRAYER

**Ministry of the Word**

PSALM

HYMN

FIRST READING



HYMN

SECOND READING

THE SERMON

## Responding

### AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Let us confess the faith of the Church.  
**We believe in God the Father,  
who made the world.  
We believe in Jesus Christ, his Son,  
who redeemed humankind.  
We believe in the Holy Spirit,  
who gives life to the people of God.**

*Or*

Let us declare our faith in God:  
**We believe in God the Father,  
from whom every family  
in heaven and on earth is named.  
We believe in God the Son,  
who lives in our hearts through faith,  
and fills us with his love.  
We believe in God the Holy Spirit,  
who strengthens us  
with power from on high.  
We believe in one God;  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

*The Apostles Creed may also be used.*

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Almighty God, Father of Heaven and Earth:  
In remembering those who endured the First World War,  
we give you thanks for that conflict's conclusion;  
grant that in our memories and reflections,  
we may better learn the way of peace and of compassion in  
our own lives.

Lord, in your mercy

**Hear our prayer.**

Lord of the Church,  
we remember the responsibility we have  
as the body of Christ,  
to pray for peace,  
to bring forth your word  
and to see swords beaten into ploughshares:  
especially, we pray for chaplains who minister to the  
members of our armed/defence forces;  
grant them discernment, perseverance and protection.

Lord, in your mercy

**Hear our prayer.**

Lord of all Creation,  
as your son faced the violence of his own death,  
yet cried "Father, forgive!"  
so we pray for hearts of forgiveness in your world.  
Where nation will rise against nation,  
people against people,  
we pray that peace might prevail.  
Bless the leaders of the world with clarity of vision  
to speak peace into situations of conflict.

Lord, in your mercy

**Hear our prayer.**

Lord of compassion,  
we give thanks for the women and men  
who risked their lives  
for the sake of others during the First World War:  
especially, we remember those doctors and nurses who  
served on the Front Lines.  
Grant your blessing to those  
who serve in the theatre of war today,  
whether in combat, in logistical support or medical care.

Lord, in your mercy

**Hear our prayer.**

Lord of eternity,  
you knit together your elect  
in the Communion of all your saints;  
we remember with gratitude  
the fallen of the First World War  
and of conflicts since.  
We thank you for the promise in your word,  
that even death cannot separate us  
from your love found in Christ Jesus.  
Grant that we may live lives  
worthy of this truth as we recall those  
who laid down their lives for the benefit of others.

Lord, in your mercy

**Hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, Father of Heaven and Earth,  
hear the prayers which we ask in faith  
for the sake of your Son, who conquered death  
and stood victorious as the Prince of Peace,  
Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*Or*

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

We pray for the leaders of the nations,  
that you will guide them in the ways of freedom, justice and  
truth.

Lord, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer.**

We pray for those who bear arms on behalf of the nation,  
that we may have discipline and discernment,  
courage and compassion.

Lord, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer.**

We pray for our enemies, and those who wish us harm,  
that you will turn the hearts of all  
to kindness and friendship.

Lord, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer.**

We pray for the wounded and the captive,  
the grieving and the homeless,  
that in all their trials they may know your love and support.

Lord, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer.**

Most holy God and Father,  
hear our prayers for all who strive for peace  
and all who fight for justice.  
Help us, who today remember the cost of war,  
to work for a better tomorrow;  
and, as we commend to you lives lost in terror and conflict,  
bring us all, in the end, to the peace of your presence;  
through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### THE LORD'S PRAYER

Gathering up all our prayer and praise into one, as our  
Saviour Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

**Our Father...**

### THE PEACE

Let us pray that we may be instruments of your peace. . .

**Where there is hatred, let us sow love;**

**where there is injury, pardon;**

**where there is discord, union;**

**where there is doubt, faith;**

**where there is despair, hope;**

**where there is darkness, light;**

**where there is sadness, joy.**

**Grant that we may not so much seek**

**to be consoled as to console;**

**to be understood as to understand;**

**to be loved as to love.**

**For it is in giving that we receive;**

**it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and**

**it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.**

Jesus said: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid." (*John 14:27*)

The peace of the Lord be with you always.  
**and also with you.**

*It is appropriate that the congregation share with one another a sign of peace*

## **Going Out As God's People**

HYMN

*[The National Anthem may be sung]*

### **Act of Commitment**

Let us commit ourselves to responsible living and faithful service.

Will you strive for all that makes for peace?

**We will**

Will you seek to heal the wounds of war?

**We will**

Will you work for a just future for all humanity?

**We will**

Merciful God, we offer to you the fears in us that have not yet been cast out by love:

May we accept the hope you have placed in the hearts of all people,

And live lives of justice, courage and mercy;

through Jesus Christ our risen Redeemer. **Amen**

BLESSING

God grant to the living, grace  
to the departed, rest,  
to the Church and to the nations, peace and concord;  
and the blessing..

DISMISSAL

Neither death nor life can separate us from the love of God.  
**Thanks be to God. Amen**

*Or*

Go in peace. Love one another as Christ has loved us.  
**Thanks be to God.**

## Additional Collects

### FOR COMMITMENT TO RECONCILIATION

Almighty God  
through your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ  
you call your people into  
a common fellowship of peace and love;  
grant that we may always seek  
reconciliation and forgiveness,  
in our own relationships, in the life of our country,  
and amongst the family of nations across the world:  
May we never fall silent in the face of injustice,  
always seek wholeness where there is division,  
and continually proclaim the gospel of unconditional love,  
given to us in Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. **Amen**

### FOR PEACE IN A BROKEN WORLD

Lord God our Creator,  
your Son Jesus Christ prayed  
that his disciples might have abundant life;  
we gather to bring before you those whose lives are scarred  
by the evils of hatred, violence and genocide,  
by our inhumanity one to another.  
Through the mystery of Christ's suffering  
transform our brokenness and disunity  
into a new a lasting wholeness and peace:  
we ask this through him who suffered, died and rose again,  
even Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**



## FOR FORGIVENESS

Loving God,  
you made us in your own image  
and set us in the midst of your creation;  
move us to repentance for our marring of that image  
and the destruction of your creation  
by our sins of greed and hatred, injustice and warfare;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**