

# A COMMEMORATION OF THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME FOR LOCAL USE

On the first day of the Battle of the Somme, the 5,500 casualties of the 36th Ulster Division on 1 July 1916 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 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.

## Preparation

### GREETING

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.**

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

*Psalm 46.1*

### BIDDING PRAYER

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 Battle of the Somme.  
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.**

## ACT OF COMMEMORATION

*Names 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

### Ministry of the Word

## READING

### JOHN 15: 12-17

Jesus said: ‘No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another’.

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

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 at  
the Battle of the Somme  
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.**

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 at the Battle of the  
Somme.

Grant your blessing to those  
who serve in the theatre of war to-  
day, whether in combat, in logistical  
support or medical care.

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

## A 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, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, The power, And the glory, For ever and ever. Amen.**

## THE PEACE

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 those present share with one another a sign of peace*

## Going Out As God's People

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...