

From the Rectory....

Dear Friends,

'Lest we forget'

This year, Remembrance Sunday falls on the 8th November. This is always a poignant time of the year as we call to mind those who have given their lives in the cause of freedom and remember the carnage that still exists in many corners of the world. As we prepare to commemorate those brave men and women, we are besieged by another enemy of a totally different kind – the Corona Virus. This is having an effect on all our lives and not least, on the way we operate at St. Mary's.

With the advent of social distancing, we are severely limited as to those who can attend worship in the Church and our usual gathering for Remembrance has had to be 're-invented' to try and satisfy the Government guidelines and the needs of our community. At the time of writing, it is our intention to hold two Services, one at **10.00am** and the other at **6.00pm**. These, sadly **will have to be ticketed** and these can be obtained 'on line.' (Details elsewhere in this Magazine and on posters around the Village) Both Services will be similar and each will contain the "Two Minutes' Silence" although, obviously, not at the traditional 11.00am. This can be observed on Wednesday 11th as we join with the Nation in keeping the Armistice Remembrance at 11.00am. Of course, any of this may change as National guidelines are reassessed. At the moment, we are not allowed to sing in Church but there will be appropriate music and readings and, of course, the wreath laying but I must ask you to wear a face covering in the Church. When leaving, please stagger your exit so as to maintain social distancing.

As we gather to remember the atrocities of warfare and the foolishness of humankind and our aim is to give thanks for the freedoms we enjoy this day which was bought at so high a cost. We look forward to sharing together in these two Services and we will not be defeated by the Covid 19 virus. Please make an effort to come 'We will remember them.'

On Sunday 1st November, there is another Act of Remembrance as we gather at 6.30pm to give thanks for all those who we have loved but see no longer. This '**All Souls' Day'** Eucharist is a time to remember, to reflect and re-live the treasured memories we hold of those who have been so dear to us but have passed from this life into the glory of heaven. For many, that anguish, so often hidden, is still raw and painful. On this night we light candles and place them on the Cross. These small flames remind us of the ever burning light of those who are shining in heaven. The Cross reminds us that our pain and suffering is inextricably linked with the sufferings of our Lord Jesus as he hung and died. The names of those you wish to be remembered can be written down and given to me or the Churchwardens and they will be read aloud during the Service. (before 28th October, please!)

During these difficult days, we need to be strong and courageous and look for new ways to be a God-centred presence in the midst of our community. We need to hold fast to what we have and not be defeated in the face of adversity. It seems as though a second wave of the virus is soon to be upon us... and there may well be other 'spikes' but as long as we look after each other and observe the guidelines, I believe we will all come through this. Christmas may be bleak this year – in our homes and in our Church, but with care, creativity and conscientiousness, we will rise above the present crisis. Keep safe; keep strong and keep the Faith!

Fr Keith