

ANZAC Day 2020

Apart, but Together as One'

A Reflection.

The Rt Rev'd Denise Ferguson



The Ode:

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.

Reflection:

These words, the fourth stanza of Laurence Binyon's poem 'For the Fallen', have become synonymous with ANZAC Day commemorations, as has the wearing of poppies; red for those who made the ultimate sacrifice, purple for the animals of war, and white both as a symbol of peace and for the nursing corp.

Greetings as we stand 'apart, but together as one' across Australia, New Zealand, Gallipoli and many other places around the world to remember and give thanks for those who gave their lives at Gallipoli on that first ANZAC Day in 1915. In recent years ANZAC commemorations have become a time to remember all who have made the ultimate sacrifice as a result of war, conflict, terrorism, and service in our Defence Forces.

I acknowledge that this ANZAC Day is most unusual as we gather 'apart, but together as one' in our homes and at our gates. However, I urge you to put aside our current circumstances, as we remember and honour those who laid down their lives for our freedom.

ANZAC Day is not a day to glorify war. Rather, it is a day to solemnly reflect upon the sacrifice made on our behalf. Sacrifice that contributed so significantly to the freedom we too often take for granted.

It is a day to remind ourselves that we value this nation.

It is a time to acknowledge the spirit of courage, ingenuity, humour, mate ship and compassion; love for one another, that endures beyond that first ANZAC Day. A spirit that we see so powerfully in our communities, especially in times of crisis.

The Gospel reading set for ANZAC Day, John 15:9-17 speaks of that spirit in another time and place.

The resurrected Jesus is preparing his disciples for the day when he must return to the Father. He speaks of the love between Father and Son; a love he now shares with them.

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends..... “

This is one of the most powerful life lessons Jesus leaves for his disciples and for each of us. This is the life lesson lived out on that first ANZAC Day: a sacrificial love for one another, and not only for those on the front line.

‘This year,’ As Lainie Anderson wrote in the Sunday Mail here in Adelaide, ‘we could, perhaps, also pause to reflect on the wartime resilience of Australians at home, who strived to keep up the morale of men away in the trenches, who cared for those returning with shocking wounds, who knitted socks and sold buttons to raise money for the war effort, who survived on rations and grew their own food when store shelves were stripped of stock.’

The enduring ANZAC Spirit: lived out in communities across Australia and New Zealand. Seeds of endurance, courage, ingenuity, humour, mate ship and compassion; love for one another. Seeds that have grown and flourished for over 100 years.

The service of those in our Defence Forces continues today. These past months we have seen the selfless service of Defence Force members as they have supported our communities through fire, flood, drought, and now pandemic. For every act of service, there are family members at home, also serving sacrificially. They are following in a great tradition.

We give thanks today for those who have served, who continue to serve, and for those who support them.

May the ANZAC spirit of endurance, courage, ingenuity, humour, mate ship and compassion; love for one another, continue to grow, flourish, and sustain this generation and all who will come after us.

Lest we forget.

Prayer:

I invite you to pray with me.

In the spirit of endurance, courage, ingenuity, humour, mate ship and compassion; in the spirit of love, we gather today, ‘apart, but together as one’, to remember those first ANZAC’s and their families; acknowledging that we will never fully understand their sacrifice, or the cost of their commitment.

We remember the War Animals who served and sacrificed without choice.

We pray for peace.

Compassionate God,
the scars of conflict remain with each succeeding generation.

Hold with tenderness all whose trauma and stress still visit them in the dark of night,
and at times when the world around them expects them to have moved on.

Cradle the brokenness of those who, as a consequence of war, were widowed, orphaned or
permanently affected by the loss of someone dear to them.

God of justice, truth, and compassion, we hold before you those whom we remember,
and those whose names we will never know. Grant them your peace.

We remember the camaraderie, agony, courage, and compassion of service,
but save us from ever glorifying the horror and tragedy of war.

(pause)

Our world continues to be fractured by war, terrorism, oppression, fear and injustice.
We pray that the leaders of the world may exercise tolerance, respect, discernment, wisdom,
strength and compassion in their decision making,
and that we may do the same in our own communities.

We pray for safety for all members of the Defence Forces serving today.
We remember their families, friends and all who support them.

As we remember,
as we hold these memories dear,
may we who have inherited the legacy of those first ANZAC's:
the spirit of endurance, courage, ingenuity, humour, mate ship and compassion
re-dedicate ourselves to the cause of justice, freedom, generosity and peace.
Give us the wisdom, discernment, conviction, and strength to build a better world.
Amen.

A Blessing:

The blessing of our God,
from whom we come,
in whom we are enfolded
and to whom we shall return
Be with you on your pilgrimage through life.
With the power of the Father protecting,
the love of the Son indwelling
and the light of the Spirit guiding your way.
Amen.