



## Remembrance Sunday

November 10, 2019

Micah 4:1-5

Romans 8:31- 39

John 15:9-17

### **1<sup>ST</sup> READING**

#### A READING FROM THE BOOK OF MICAH

In days to come the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised up above the hills. Peoples shall stream to it, and many nations shall come and say: 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between many peoples, and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away; they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; but they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken. For all the peoples walk, each in the name of its god, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.

Micah 4:1-5

### **2<sup>ND</sup> READING**

#### A Reading from Paul's Letter to the Romans

What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, 'For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.' No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:31- 39

## GOSPEL READING

### A READING FROM THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO JOHN

As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. 'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 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.

John 15:9-17

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*If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.*

The readings set for today provide an abundance of good sermon material — good sermon material for Remembrance Sunday. Sometimes, we find a multitude of issues and beliefs that would take more than the wisdom of Solomon could ever really solve. Some folk feel really challenged by our observance of a day focused on conflicts.

■ I heard a report that at least one church Pastor has decided to totally ignore this important day. He believes that Remembrance Day mainly glorifies war and such a glorification has no place in Christian life. In my own experience, I have never seen such a glorification taking place.

Thankfulness, yes — glorification, never.

A call for preparedness, yes — instigation, never.

An attitude of resolve to win, yes — lack of compassion, never.

■ In Canada the mood for observing Remembrance Day is set in the name chosen — 'Remembrance Day'. It is not 'Veterans' Day, implying a focus solely on the Armed Forces. The term Remembrance Day broadens the context and who is included in our observances. You see, in Remembrance Day we honour the bravery of the many Canadians who have put themselves in harm's way for the life and well-being of other people. Without lessening the massive contributions of the people in the Canadian armed forces, we additionally can recognize those who have given up their lives as firefighters; as police officers; as first responders of many stripes; as untold numbers of people who have willingly lost their lives in their efforts to save others.

Every day we hear of their selfless service through our media newscasts and stories. These too, are to be included among those whom we remember and honour.

**W**e live in a very complex and, at times, dangerous world. We also are people who need one another and thus depend on one another. We have been created as social beings. Even people who consider themselves as 'loners' cannot totally exempt themselves from the rest of society. A close examination will reveal that even the most ardent proponents of living off of the land, find themselves depending on the products and services of other people. Their shirts and pants did not make themselves. Their pruning hooks and hatchets likewise were not self-made. Also to be mentioned should be cooking utensils, garden tools, and so much more.

**T**o be sure; some of us are more independent than others. But when a major problem occurs, any of us as creations of God are to be thankful that there is someone to help us out. That is how we have been made. We can pretend things are otherwise for a length of time. But, the day eventually comes along when we need the solid help of other folk. We then thank God for their presence. Yes, times of danger seem to amplify our dependence on other people — especially if we are not with appropriate skills and are without the right equipment.

**I**nterestingly, we would do well to look at another factor in our need to seek help. That is in our relationship to and with God our Creator. While we are in the midst of helping one another, we are well-advised to seek the help of God in what we are doing. In doing this, it is well for us to also seek to be aware of where God is making a difference for the better. God likes to work with God's people! To this end there is an old Russian fisherman saying that goes like this: *When your boat is caught in a storm, pray to God to safely reach the shore — and keep on rowing!*

**S**o where does all of this take us in regard to Remembrance Day?

First - If we are prepared for the aggression of others who may become hostile to us; that should not be seen as or thought to be in any way a glorification of war.

Second - If we note the self-giving service of so many in places of conflict; we are expressing our thanks for what they have done in the service the people of Canada and other free nations — we are not glorifying war.

Third - If we also note the self-giving service of the many loving Canadians and others who risk their lives or make the ultimate sacrifice for one of our people; we are honouring their love and sense of duty in the interests of humanity.

**I**n today's Gospel Reading Jesus said this: *'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 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.'* Most folk are rightly appalled by any hint of potential open conflicts. We often sit feeling helpless as we see the stage being set for war anywhere in the world. How do we put an end to the forces

which fuel the fans of anger and discontent that lead to erupting battlefields? During the Vietnam War, there was heard a frequently heard cry: *Suppose they gave a war; and nobody came.*

**I**n a round about way, the Good News of Jesus Christ suggests that a new world awaits if greater numbers of people take his commandment seriously and live it in spite of how the rest of the world chooses to live. The observable difference in societies living as loving societies, from those which are based on excessive competitiveness and greed may seem small in their early stages. But with time, people will notice major differences in the quality of life being experienced.

**G**od does make a difference — Christ does make a difference — love does make a difference! And we can make a difference. Our job is to love. Whether a person is a 'hawk' or a 'dove' when it comes to war; we both have a choice to make. Many wars have been fought down through the centuries. The free society we enjoy has been given to us by the actions of many who have died so that we will have better lives.

**N**ow, the questions are:

*What are we doing to insure that the sacrifices of those who have gone before us were not in vain?*

What are we doing to make our society a better place for all folk?

How far does our love extend?