

ANZAC DAY 25 APRIL 2017

**11.00 AM, ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL
MELBOURNE**

Truly, we will remember them.

*An Ecumenical Service of Lament, Repentance and
Hope for the Centenary of the First World War,
especially in 1917, the Battle of Passchendaele,
those who said no to war,
the Aboriginal wars.*



This is a service of lament, repentance and hope on the centenary of the First World War. We will lament the destruction and waste of so many young men and women on all sides, the pain and anguish suffered by those who returned, by their families and communities.

This is focused in 2017 in recalling
the slaughter of Passchendaele, Fromelles, and Pozieres,
those who said no to war,
the forgotten Aboriginal wars.

We will repent of the ongoing war and violence in our world and in our hearts, and hear again the hope of God's gift of peace, given to us in the Crucified and Risen Lord, being lived out in many scenes of conflict.

We will honour the courage and self-sacrifice of all who fought in the First World War by praying for peace and doing all we can that makes for genuine peace, that young men and women may never go to war again.

In this time of heightened tensions, we especially pray that Australia and other nations will not be led into war again.

THE GATHERING OF THE PEOPLE

The people gather in silence

The service will proceed without announcement.

*You are invited to join in the responses printed in **bold**.*

As the sound of the Cathedral bells stop, all stand

THE PASCHAL CANDLE IS LIT

CALL TO WORSHIP

The Revd Canon Dr Stephen

Ames

Christ is risen! Alleluia!

He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

GREETING

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you;
and also with you.

We acknowledge the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nations,
the first inhabitants of this place.

**We honour them for their custodianship of the land,
on which we gather today.**

WELCOME

The Revd Canon Dr Stephen

Ames

On behalf of the Dean and the Chapter,
welcome to this service of lament, repentance and hope
for the centenary of the First World War,
particularly as we recall the battle of Passchendaele, Fromelles, and
Pozières,
those who said no to war, and the forgotten Aboriginal wars.
We especially welcome our preacher, Sr Helen Kearins RSM.
Truly, let us commemorate this occasion,
and remember the destruction, tragedy and loss
war has brought to humankind.

Let us worship God.

HYMN

1. The strife is past, the battle done;
now is the victor's triumph won;
now let the song of praise be sung:
Alleluia!

2. Death's mightiest powers have
done their worst,
and Jesus has his foes dispersed;
let shouts of praise and joy out burst:
Alleluia!

3. On the third day he rose again
Glorious in majesty to reign;
Let us take up the great refrain:
Alleluia!

4. He closed the frowning gates of hell;
the bars from heaven's high portals fell;
let hymns of praise his triumph tell:
Alleluia!

5. Now by your stripes, our wounded King,
Your servants free from death's dread sting,
That we may live in you and sing:
Alleluia!

Please be seated

REMEMBERING TRULY

"They"

The Bishop tells us: "When the boys come back
They will not be the same; for they'll have fought
In a just cause: they lead the last attack
On Anti-Christ; their comrades' blood has bought
New right to breed an honourable race.
They have challenged Death and dared him face to face."

"We're none of us the same!" the boys reply.
"For George lost both his legs; and Bill's stone blind;
Poor Jim's shot through the lungs and like to die;
And Bert's gone syphilitic; you'll not find
A chap who's served that hasn't found some change."
And the Bishop said: "The ways of God are strange!"

Siegfried Loraine Sassoon (1916)

THREE STORIES (see appendix, beginning p. 12)

Passchendaele Kyrie (TiS 735)

Remain seated for the Kyrie Eleison, which is repeated after each story.

Led by the Cantor, the congregation responds.

Kyrie, Kyrie, Eleison: **Kyrie, Kyrie, Eleison.**

Christe, Christe, Eleison: **Christe, Christe, Eleison.**

Kyrie, Kyrie, Eleison: **Kyrie, Kyrie, Eleison.**

Those who said no to war

Kyrie Eleison

The Aboriginal Wars

Kyrie Eleison

Pause for silent reflection

Please stand

LAMENT FOR 1917

Bruised and black clouds shed heavy tears over this land of Australia.

The first Australians were attacked and made slaves;

their children taken from them; their memory broken; their spirit destroyed.

And God wept; for these were God's children

Bruised and black clouds shed heavy tears over Fromelle and Pozieres, on the worst day in Australian history. Lieutenant Raws wrote: "My tunic is rotten with other men's blood, and splattered with a comrade's brains. It is horrible, but why should you people at home not know?" There were 5000 Australian casualties in 24 hours, 30,000 in six weeks.

And God wept; for these were God's children

Bruised and black clouds shed heavy tears over Passchendaele.

The mud gummed up rifle barrels and breeches. It swallowed up soldiers as they slept; slowed stretcher-bearers to a crawl as they waded waist deep in mud, carrying the wounded. Many drowned in the mud. Nearly half of the Australians have no known grave.

And God wept; for these were God's children.

Bruised and black clouds shed heavy tears over the soldiers who returned. Many struggled with mental health, physical illness, and disability.

And God wept; for these were God's children

Bruised and black clouds shed heavy tears over thousands of families deprived of fathers, husbands and sons. Many never knew here their loved ones lay.

And God wept; for these were God's children

Bruised and black clouds shed heavy tears over the prisons in which those who said no to war suffered brutality and ostracism.

And God wept; for these were God's children

Bruised and black clouds shed heavy tears over Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan,
as their cities become graveyards for the flowers of a generation.

And God weeps; for these are God's children.

Bruised and black clouds shed heavy tears over a whole world bowed and bloodied by wars, weary of nuclear arsenals, roads clogged by refugees – with nowhere but earth to call home.

And God weeps; for these are God's children.

God of life

Drawing life and death together in all creation, uniting the lost and the loving.

You are among us in this gathering.

**God the most merciful and compassionate, who forgets no-one,
cherish our remembering,
guide us as we pray, love, and engage with your call to peace.**

Remain standing to sing

HYMN

1. Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
O sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble;
were you there when they crucified my Lord?
2. Were you there when they nailed him to the tree? ...
3. Were you there when they pierced him in the side? ...
4. Were you there when the sun refused to shine? ...
5. Were you there when they laid him in the tomb? ...
6. Were you there when he rose from out the tomb? ...

Please be seated

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

Your word, O God, is a lamp to our feet: **and a light to our path.**

First Reading: Romans 12:14-21

Second Reading: Matthew 5:1-16

Lord, may your word live in us:
and bear much fruit to your glory.

SERMON *Sr Helen Kierans RSM* (Appendix, p. 16)

Pause for silent reflection

Stand to sing

HYMN

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. God! As with silent hearts we bring
to mind
how hate and war diminish human
kind,
we pause, and seek in worship to
increase
our knowledge of the things that make
for peace.</p> <p>3. Give us deep faith to comfort those
who mourn,
high hope to share with all the newly
born,
strong love in our pursuit of human
worth:
'lest we forget' the future of this earth.</p> | <p>2. Hallow our will as humbly we recall
the lives of those who gave and give
their all.
We thank you, God, for women,
children, men
who seek to serve in love, today as then.</p> <p>4. So, God of Peace, disarm our trust in
power,
teach us to coax the plant of peace to
flower.
May we, impassioned by your living
Word,
Remember forward to a world restored.</p> |
|---|--|

Remain standing

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

The Revd Canon Dr Stephen Ames

Let us confess:

our continued collusion with the ways of war and violence;
our implicit support for the way of nuclear destruction;
our sending forth of young men and women to kill and be killed;
and our failure to learn from the horrors of the Great War.

O Christ,
in whose body was named all the violence of the world,
and in whose memory is contained our profoundest grief,
we lay open to you:

the violence done to us in time before memory;
the unremembered wounds that have misshapen our lives;
the injuries we cannot forget and have not forgiven.
**The remembrance of them is grievous to us;
the burden of them is intolerable.**

We lay open to you:
the unremembered wounds we have inflicted;
the injuries done to us that we cannot forget
and for which we have not been forgiven.
**The remembrance of them is grievous to us;
the burden of them is intolerable.**

We lay open to you:
those who have pursued a violent knowledge the world cannot forget;
those caught up in violence they have refused to name;
those who have enacted violence which they have not repented.
**The remembrance of them is grievous to us;
the burden of them is intolerable.**

We lay open to you:
the victims of violence whose only memorial is our anger;
those whose suffering was sustained on our behalf;
those whose continued oppression provides the ground we stand on.
**The remembrance of them is grievous to us;
the burden of them is intolerable.**

Jesus said:
"Come to me, all you who labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you
rest.
Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in
heart,
and you will find rest for your souls.
For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

Friends, hear Christ's word of grace to us:

"Your sins are forgiven."

Thanks be to God!

THE LIGHTING OF CANDLES

Candles are lit from the Paschal Candle and placed in the sand bowls.

During the singing of the chant, you are invited to go to the sand bowls to light a candle for peace and remembrance of those who have died, or are suffering from war.

CHANT

Dona Nobis Pacem Domine (Grant us peace, Lord)

The cantor introduces the chant.

The congregation sings the chant while the Cantor sings the verses.

1. I will hear what the Lord has to say, a voice that speaks of peace, peace for his people and his friends, and those who turn to him in their hearts.
2. Blest are they who bring peace, for they shall be called the children of God.
3. 'Peace I leave with you', says the Lord, 'my peace I give you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid, I will be with you always.'
4. Christ is our peace, making us one.
In his own person he destroyed hostility.
He came and preached the good news of peace.
5. Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your apostles,
'I leave you peace, my peace I give to you.'
Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your church,
and grant us the peace and unity of your kingdom. Amen.

Remain seated for the prayers.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION (Appendix, p. 20)

Response:

God, come to our aid: **grant us the gift of peace.**

And now let us pray together:

God of all creation,

**We give thanks for the democracy in which we live
and the freedom we have to say no to militarism and war.**

**Hasten the day when all people shall live together
in the peace and unity that you intend for us.**

Despite our weakness and our failings,

**we offer ourselves to you afresh
and ask that you use us
to help bring about your will on earth.
Amen.**

Our Father in heaven...

Please feel free to pray in your own tongue.

Please stand

COMMITMENT TO DISCIPLESHIP

The Revd Canon Dr Stephen

Ames

Jesus said:

"Blessed are the peace makers,
for they will be called children of God." (Matthew 5:9)

As a sign of our commitment to be peacemakers,
let us share the Peace of Christ with one another.

THE PEACE

We are the Body of Christ;

his Spirit is with us.

The peace of Christ be with you all;

and also with you.

The Peace is shared

Remain standing for the Hymn, during which an offering is received.

HYMN

*The Cantor sings the first verse and the congregation repeats it,
and after that sings the remainder of the Hymn*

**1. Lord of earth and all creation,
let your love possess our land:
wealth, and freedom, far
horizons,
mountain, forests, shining sand:
may we share, in faith and
friendship,
gifts unmeasured from your
hand.**

**2. People of the ancient Dreamtime,
they who found this country first,
ask with those, the later comers,
will our dream be blessed or
cursed?
Grant us, Lord, new birth, new
living,
hope for which our children thirst.**

**3. Lord, life-giving healing Spirit,
on our hurts your mercy shower;
lead us by your inward dwelling,
guiding, guarding, every hour.
Bless and keep our land Australia:
in your will her peace and power.**

BLESSING

May God bless you and keep you.
May God smile upon you and be gracious to you.
May God look upon you kindly, and give you peace.
Amen

Please remain seated for the postludes:

Stay with us (Taize)

Hymn to God, my God, in my sickness (text: John Donne, music: Jim Minchin)

Worship leaders: The Revd Canon Dr Stephen Ames, Sr Helen Kearins
RSM,

Music: Peter Rayner, Jim Minchin, Jennifer Bryce,

This service is sponsored by St Paul's Cathedral and Pax Christi Australia,
the Victorian Council of Churches, the Uniting Church in Australia, the
Melbourne Catholic Office for Justice and Peace, the Anglican Social
Responsibilities Committee, Social Policy Connections, and the Anzac
Centenary Peace Coalition.

Appendix

Passchendaele

Compiled by John H Smith

The battles of 1917 were the worst. There was no heroic landing or scaling of cliffs. Instead, powerful artillery barrages raged and poisonous gases rolled over the land while aircraft and new technology increased the lethal impact of the war.¹ Of the third Passchendaele offensive launched on the 9th October 1917 ² they said: "no battle in the War could compare in dreadfulness".

Had Commander in Chief, Douglas Haig stopped the campaign early in October, Passchendaele might of have been remembered as one of his great achievements. But in the days before he renewed his attack, heavy rain fell. Everywhere the land was turned into a series of lakes and bogs. Weapons were fouled by mud. Roads and duckboards collapsed, making it impossible to bring in supplies. The infantry risked becoming bogged up to their armpits in mud, and some simply disappeared. Heavy artillery, put in place with immense effort, often sank in the mud when fired. A soldier said: "Our worst enemy was the mud, it is beyond description ...the [men] came to dread mud more than shells."³

Haig was obsessed with this campaign but was poorly prepared. He enjoyed great prestige amongst his professional colleagues but came to be regarded as the "supreme British donkey" whose unimaginative and irresponsible approach sacrificed countless troops for little strategic gain.⁴

While British Prime Minister Lloyd George continued to proclaim the futility of Haig's offensive, "he did not lift a finger to stop it".⁵

It was said: "To live through Passchendaele was to come out the other side of hell." Neither side understood exactly what it was fighting for, or even the confines of the contested territory. They just slogged it out backwards and forwards over the churned up mud.⁶

¹ See Joan Beaumont, *Broken Nation: Australian and the Great War*, p.392

² See Patsy Adam-Smith, *The Anzacs*, p.368-9.

³ Beaumont, *op.cit*, p.358 and p.354.

⁴ Beaumont, *ibid*, p.354.

⁵ Beaumont, *ibid*, p.354.

⁶ Patsy Adam-Smith, *op.cit*, p.369.

The losses were immense. The Germans suffered an estimated 220,000 casualties. There were some 275,000 casualties under British command. Of these 5,300 were New Zealanders, 16,000 Canadians and 38,000 Australians.⁷

Of Haig it has been said: " it is possible that [he did] more damage to his own army than the Germans."⁸

It is not for nothing that the photographs of this campaign have become the ones most used by Australians to reflect the horror of the Western Front.

Those who said no to war⁹

Compiled by John H Smith

When the Great War began the military leaders, schooled in the methods of Nelson and Wellington, imagined a quick victory. But the old ways did not apply in the world's first industrial war. By 1915 the War was static, and by 1917 it was bogged down.

From the outset most of the churches proclaimed the righteousness of the Empire's cause, and joined in the recruitment drives. But in the small town of Hay in New South Wales the Reverend Bernard Linden Webb, a Methodist Minister, declared himself to be a pacifist. As the slaughter continued he remained firm in his resolve. He said:

"This war is not in keeping with our profession of Christianity... It is the outcome of materialism, worldliness and godlessness... Science is being prostituted to the terrible business of making instruments of destruction, and thousands upon thousands of lives are being ruthlessly sacrificed... the days are coming when the tales of blood and iron will no longer thrill us, but sadden and disgust."¹⁰

⁷ AWM Website.

⁸ Beaumont, *op.cit*, p. 358 and p. 392.

⁹ The content of this paper relies heavily on Bruce Scates, Rebecca Wilson & Laura James, *World War One: a history in 100 stories*, pp254-256, A meddlesome priest, the Reverend Bernard Linden Webb

¹⁰ Page 255

Although the war had not yet reached the stages of the Somme and Passchendaele, the congregation became divided. As recruiting continued apace, Webb continued his message. Hay was one of the first communities to openly debate the justice of the conflict that would divide Australian society. At the same time fifteen young men – 20% of the Hay congregation – joined up. Webb offered solid pastoral support to the men their families. Eventually 4 lost their lives and 9 became seriously sick or wounded. But faced with such losses the congregation found it hard to tolerate their Minister's message and some left the church.

Webb's views became part of a bitter debate within the Methodist Church. He was accused of turning a blind eye to reality and was publicly reviled as a traitor. At the time of the Conscription debate the Methodist Church, along with most churches, declared its support. Webb, who decided he could not remain true to his principles and stay in the Church, resigned a week before the first Conscription referendum. When both Conscription referenda failed, Webb's views seemed vindicated. But hounded from his church, he was a casualty of the War, and the Conscription debate that continued to divide the Australian society.

Many Australians like Webb did oppose the Great War. In being faithful to their principles they made a unique democratic contribution to peacemaking. Because of them many thousands of Australian and German lives were saved.

The Aboriginal wars

Compiled by John H Smith

In the first decades of the twentieth century Australian history was taught as the last lecture in the course on British history. Our story was a footnote to empire, and our Indigenous people, who were regarded as having no history, hardly featured in it. As late as 1959 Professor John La Nauze depicted Aboriginal history as a melancholy anthropological footnote in the history of European settlement.¹¹

In the 1970s and 80s Aboriginal history began to be seriously investigated by white Australians. Henry Reynolds' research into life on the other side of the frontier showed that, conservatively, at least 20,000 aboriginal deaths had occurred in wars with settlers between 1788 and 1928. He

¹¹ See Tom Griffiths, *The Art of Time Travel*, p.319-320.

commented that it was not possible to bring this narrative into our history without changing the whole of the story as it had been so far received.¹² In the culture wars that followed these findings John Howard declared loudly that he did not accept "the Black Armband" version of Australian History.

Since then huge resources have been poured into the Australian War Memorial to commemorate the Great War and nationalize the Anzac myth. The AWM does acknowledge the Aboriginal diggers who served in wars, but it steadfastly refuses to admit that the now well-researched conflict that occurred on the frontier was a war.¹³

The Australian landscape has many places with names such as Butchers Creek, Skull Creek, Massacre Bay, Slaughterhouse Creek and Skeleton Creek. These were named, not by Aboriginal people, but by settlers wanting to remember what their ancestors did there.

Recent investigations of the number of deaths have concluded that in Queensland alone, between 1820 and 1900, more than 65,000 Aborigines died in frontier wars.

It is no longer possible to support the idea that the only wars that happened, or that should matter to Australians, are the ones fought overseas.

On Anzac day we acknowledge that Aboriginal people died here protecting their sovereignty, their culture, their homelands, their beliefs, and their people.

It is true that the military campaigns of the Great War, in which 61,000 Australians died overseas, were an important factor in creating the Australia we have known since then. But a significant war occurred in Australia, on the frontier, where a greater number of people suffered and died.

For Indigenous Australians, that was their Great War.¹⁴

¹² Professor Henry Reynolds, the Inaugural Tom Stannage Memorial Lecture, UWA, March 6, 2017, <http://www.ias.uwa.edu.au/lectures/henryreynolds/ nocache>

¹³ See David Stephens and Alison Broinowski, eds, *The Honest History Book*, Ch. 17, pp.253-54, 242, 244.

¹⁴ Henry Reynolds, *The Forgotten War*, p.247

Anzac Day 2017 – Truly We Will Remember Them

Sermon by Sr Helen Kearins RSM

I begin by acknowledging the Wurundgeri people of the Kulan Nation and pay my respects to their Elders, past and present.

On this day I particularly acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander warriors who gave their lives defending this land. Warriors such as Pemulwuy, Windradyne and Jundamurra. It is a sad irony that as thousands gather around Australia to remember a battle fought in another country, for another country, those who first died defending this land remain unacknowledged. Unacknowledged in our history, in our hearts and minds and unacknowledged in the National War Memorial or along Anzac Parade which bristles with memorials to every war Australia has been involved in.

Truly We will remember them

It is disturbing that many Australians still deny the violence with which the original inhabitants of this land were displaced from their own land; that the word ‘*invasion*’ is anathema to many people and that many still insist the land was settled peacefully. Yet today, all around the country people are remembering a battle, fought on the other side of the world but which has been promoted as the event which gave birth to this nation.

This idea persists. In looking up websites to check road closures and public transport for today, I came across a site called ‘*Only Melbourne*’, and under the heading ‘*Why is this day so special to Australians?*’ as well as a brief history it added:

The idea that some sort of "blood sacrifice" was a necessary rite of passage or initiation ceremony in the birth of a nation was common in the late Victorian and Edwardian period. In attempting the daunting task of storming the Gallipoli peninsula the ANZACs created an event which, it was felt, would help to shape the new Australia.

Admittedly the Commonwealth of Australia was, at that stage ‘new’, only fourteen years old, but the colonies which went on to make up that Federation, began in 1788. Surely it should be a **greater** source of national pride that these colonies united to form a Federation and an Independent Australia, through robust discussion and negotiation – not through violence. When will we celebrate the Founders of Federation and Truly remember them?

Strange that we deny the reality of the Frontier Wars, ignore the fact that we achieved Federation and independence without a civil war or a war of independence but rely on the distorted history of a failed military campaign as the founding story of our nation.

It seems that in failing to TRULY remember our past we have become stuck. In denying the violent invasion of this continent, we are left still looking over our shoulders, disproportionately afraid of a small number of the latest 'boat people' – Is it that somewhere deep in our national psyche we are still haunted by what the first boat people did to the original inhabitants?

In maintaining the lie that the battle at Gallipoli shaped the new Australia, we deny the history of the colonies including the sheer hard work, determination, resilience, inventiveness and the development of values such as mateship and giving those who have erred a second chance.

We have not TRULY remembered. The national narrative has been distorted to suit the purposes of those who reshaped it. We should not be surprised at the emergence of spin doctoring, fake news and alternative facts – we've been doing it for years!

The challenge for us today gathered here in a different space from that being walked by many Australians today is, why are we here and not walking to the war memorial? Which is in no way to dishonour those who want to pay respect to their family and loved ones who gave their lives in service to their country.

I think we are here to take up the challenge of the theme you have chosen for this service: to **Truly Remember** - not just for ourselves but for the next generation and for generations to come.

How do we do that? How do we TRULY remember. We have already begun by being here. We are gathered in a place publicly declaring itself as Christian. We gather as an Ecumenical group from varying Christian traditions, with a common belief in Jesus and his teaching. We pray together. We dare to enter a space, a sacred space, here in this beautiful building and within ourselves where we are open to a power greater than ourselves, aware of our connection to all beings and receptive to truth that is beyond manipulation. We come open, poor in spirit.

Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Today's reading from Romans urges us to "*rejoice with those who rejoice and to mourn with those who mourn; we are called to share the life experiences of others, to care and to show empathy.*

Through mourning personally we develop empathy; through mourning collectively we build a sense of community, as many Australians are doing today. However, our mourning is selective. Extraordinary resources have been poured into maintaining the Anzac story and remembering the wars in which Australians fought overseas. Yet Indigenous Australians are told to forget the wars waged against them; to move on from the past; to get over it. Their remembering is denigrated as a 'black armband' view of history;

but it's alright for footballers to wear black armbands to honour those who have died.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

To stand up for an alternative view of our history calls for us to be clear headed and well informed. It calls us to be strong yet gentle, assertive yet cooperative, powerful yet disciplined in our use of power.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

We strive to be in right relationship with God, one another and with all creation. We endeavour to grow in credibility by showing that we can be believed; to do our best to integrate what we preach and what we practise.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.

Not all of our efforts succeed, but we dare to take prudent risks, to remain open minded. The merciful allow for mistakes and provide cover for others to innovate and sometimes fail. We persist in refusing to discard people, harm the environment or seek to win at any cost.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

We gather here today in an alternative service for Anzac day not because we just want to be different, but because we believe peace is the only true direction for human progress. As Pope Francis says in his message for the World day of Peace this year:

For Christians, nonviolence is not merely tactical behaviour but a person's way of being, the attitude of one who is so convinced of God's love and power that he or she is not afraid to tackle evil with the weapons of love and truth alone. Love of one's enemy constitutes the nucleus of the Christian revolution'

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God

Paul also urges us *to live in harmony with one another, to live at peace with everyone.*" This may sound simple and even pacifist, but he goes on to say: *Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good.*" To overcome evil with good, to create a culture of peace, not of violence, requires hard work; the hard work of analysis, critique, scholarship, networking, communication and creative strategic action.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God

People who practice the virtues associated with the previous seven beatitudes, will face criticism, opposition and even persecution. As well as courage, we need the skills to work with such opposition. For example, being familiar with the levels of resistance to change. First people will say there is no issue; we patiently show that there is; then they say 'But there is

nothing we can do about it'. We need to have viable alternatives to offer. Then we move on through some saying other people won't accept it to believing that yes, we are capable of bringing about change.

Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and speak evil against you because of me; your reward is great in heaven.

The eight beatitudes provide a portrait of a person who is blessed, good, and authentic. In the verses following Jesus describes such a person as 'the salt of the earth' and 'the light of the world'. But it is not enough to just 'be' salt and light, we are exhorted to ACT like salt. Salt might not be a good metaphor these days as we know the effects of too much of it in our diets, but we also know the history of its usefulness in preserving food. In thinking about salt I recalled the power of Gandhi's salt marches in achieving independence for India. Related to such an essential element for Indians at that time, they were a brilliant form of non-violent protest. What would be our equivalent of the Salt Marches today? What would it look like if we regained our 'saltiness'?

Jesus exhorts us not to hide our lights under bushel but to let it shine before others. Earlier I referred to the effect of mourning communally, in building community and that that happens today as people gather in many places around the country to mourn those who died in war. And of course thousands more will also gather down the road at the MCG in another form of community. I think these gatherings and the large number of people who attend, tells us that people are seeking community and meaningful ritual. What has happened to our churches' capacity to provide these essential ingredients for human life?

How do we shine our light in a time of a world war being fought piecemeal, in different counties and continents, of terrorism, abuse of migrants and refugees and victims of human trafficking, and the devastation of the environment? And in our own region, as one analyst described it: 'a diplomatic crisis with military posturing'? - a crisis which could erupt into global conflict, not from planned aggression but from a mistake, an error of judgement, a kneejerk reaction...or a tweet.

I don't know the answer to this. But I do believe we have the faith, we have the character described in the beatitudes, we are capable of the love that can change the world. While each of us makes a contribution, we cannot do it alone; we need to support one another and generate the strength and energy that comes from working together.

Perhaps we could more effectively use modern technology to re-invigorate our saltiness and create new ways to let our light shine.

What if we were to make use social media to create gatherings for peace.

What if all churches had a time of prayer for peace at the same time eg Friday lunch – perhaps using a simple shared format; perhaps in churches, perhaps in public places.

Perhaps we remind ourselves that an integral ecology is made up of simple daily gestures that break with the logic of violence and every day to offer a kind word, a smile or any small gesture which sows peace and friendship. If we are to truly remember those who died in war, we must do everything in our power to prevent it ever happening again.

References

Pope Francis. Message for World Day of Peace, 1st January, 2017.

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Prayers of intercession 2017

In this time of heightened tension between peoples and nations let us pray that our leaders will access deep wisdom, and exercise restraint in their dealings with one another so that the world may turn away from war and live in peace.

Let us pray:

For all who continue to grieve and mourn lives lost in World War 1, and in all wars;

may they come to know peace of mind and heart.

God, come to our aid: *grant us the gift of peace.*

For all who, having faithfully served their country, continue to struggle with disability and trauma; may they receive justice, compassion and support.

God, come to our aid: *grant us the gift of peace.*

We give thanks for all Australians who 100 years ago voted No to military conscription, and for all who today, for conscience sake and the love of peace, resist the call to arms and the production of nuclear weapons, may they have courage to match their convictions.

God, come to our aid: *grant us the gift of peace.*

For those in many lands who live with violence and long for peace;
may they be steadfast in their hope for a better world.

God, come to our aid: *grant us the gift of peace.*

For those who have been driven from their homes
by wars that we have served in, and live seeking shelter as refugees;
may they receive comfort, support and sanctuary.

God, come to our aid: *grant us the gift of peace.*

For our indigenous peoples, who suffered invasion
and massacre in an unacknowledged war;
may their cries be recognized,
and may they receive lasting justice in our time.

God, come to our aid: *grant us the gift of peace.*

For all who work to further the cause of a costly peace;
may they continue their efforts with hope and courage.

God, come to our aid: *grant us the gift of peace.*

For the Church;
In times of escalating threat
may it faithfully witness to Christ's peace,
that the world may be released from the futility of aggression,
and live without walls, and the fear that builds them.

God, come to our aid: *grant us the gift of peace.*

For the United Nations;
that it may strongly support
the efforts of those in the world community
who are seeking a ban on Nuclear weapons,
and lead the world to a new dawning of peace.

God, come to our aid: *grant us the gift of peace.*

For the leaders of the nations, politicians and diplomats;
May they be freed from the presumption of war,
and work together in the costly process of peace making,
to build up the community of nations.

God, come to our aid: *grant us the gift of peace.*

For agencies of compassion and care;
may they have the resources and support they need.

God, come to our aid: *grant us the gift of peace.*

For international federations of labour, industry and commerce;
may their goal be justice and equity for all.

God, come to our aid: *grant us the gift of peace.*

Let us pray together:

*God of all creation,
We give thanks for the democracy in which we live
and the freedom we have to say no to militarism and war.
Hasten the day when all people shall live together
in the peace and unity that you intend for us.
Despite our weakness and our failings,
we offer ourselves to you afresh
and ask that you use us
to help bring about your will on earth.
Amen.*

And now let us pray as Jesus had taught us:
Our Father...

