



From the Rector

This month sees Remembrance Sunday and at St Mary's we shall mark this day with a Service of Remembrance that will start at 10.45am on Sunday 10th

This is always a special and important service as we remember those who have given their lives in service of their country and to bring about peace and justice across the world. But this year it seems ever more vital that we strive for peace as we see the wars that still rage across the world especially in the Middle East and between Russia and Ukraine.

John Lennon famously wrote: 'Imagine there's no countries, It isn't hard to do, Nothing to kill or die for And no religion too Imagine all the people living life in peace.' But on Remembrance Sunday, we should reflect on those wars past and present and consider the real way to peace.

The way of war: *'What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire but do not have, so you kill.'* (James 4:1-2). James reminds us that war has its basis in our own hearts, with the selfish desires that exploit, bully and kill others to get our own way. Sadly, when nations allow these inner selfish attitudes to determine their policy the result is war. Only God can establish true peace.

The way of peace: *Isaiah, 2,700 years before John Lennon, also imagined a future of peace without any war: 'They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.'* (Isaiah 2:4).

Only Jesus, the Prince of Peace, can bring true peace to our lives and world. Jesus did not experience the horror of battle, but He did die an horrific death at the hand of the Romans. He gave His life sacrificially, as He took God's anger at our sin on Himself and went on to conquer death in His resurrection. He did this out of love for us and calls us to love others in the same way: 'Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.' (John 15:13).

How can we demonstrate such love ourselves? In those small ways in showing love to those around us, in our homes, in our community and spreading to the wider nation. If this seems too big a task, St Francis of Assisi famously said "Start by doing what is necessary, then do what is possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible" Although peace across the world feels very far away at the moment we must remember that nothing is impossible with God and we can be confident in God's plan to bring an end to all wars when Jesus returns.

With many blessings

Fr David