

Remembrance Day Reading

Reader 1: Remembrance Day.

Reader 2: Today.

Reader 1: In many places across the country and across the continent, people are bringing their ordinary lives to a halt to reflect and remember.

Reader 2: We are caught in the middle.

Reader 1: We are pacifists, the quiet in the land, the peaceful people.

Reader 2: We are followers of Christ; we do not kill. We do not believe that we, or anyone, should go to war.

Reader 1: We are also Canadians, and human beings. We live in a land that has been defined and shaped by wars and participation in wars. At least a part of our benefits, at least a part of our peace today, comes from others' participation, from the death of others, in war.

Reader 2: We are caught in the middle.

Reader 1: How can we remember, and remember with a certain gladness and gratitude, as our neighbors seem to remember, the waste and hate and destruction and death of war?

Reader 2: How can we ignore the efforts and sacrifice that have given us a measure of our freedom and security?

Reader 1: We are caught in the middle.

Reader 2: We do not know how to remember, but yet we do not dare to forget.

Reader 1: "Lest we forget" say signs and banners; "lest we forget!" say the politicians and poets.

Reader 2: The world outside the sanctuary door makes great noise over remembering,

Reader 1: and the shops stay firmly closed on this day of remembrance, although they have ceased to do so on Sundays.

Reader 2: We do not dare to forget; we must not forget.

Reader 1: Yet what we will remember, and why we remember, is not the "what" and "why" of the world.

Reader 2: We will remember the excruciating, horrific lives and deaths of young people who thought that killing was the only way to serve their countries and the cause of peace.

Reader 1: We will remember the dirt and blood and uncertainty and pain and loneliness and mistakes of soldiers far from their homes.

Reader 2: We will remember the devastation of the earth that was once home, and became battlefield, barren and filled with discarded weapons, some still capable of death, thirty, forty, fifty years later: bombs and land mines.

Reader 1: We will remember the people who lived in the land until the battle lines were drawn, and who then became homeless; the people who went without clothing, shelter, food, as more and more materials were devoured by the war effort; the people, civilians, who died as though they had been soldiers, simply because they were there, the wrong place and the wrong time.

Reader 2: We will remember the children who grew up homeless, without family, crippled, the children who had no childhood because of losses and because of the horrors which occurred around them constantly.

Reader 1: We will remember families who followed the war news, and were afraid every time the phone rang or a knock came at the door, that news of a child's death in a far land would greet them.

Reader 2: We will remember the families separated by war; families that in the end were headed by young widows, or lacked places at the table; families that were broken apart by the changes in the stranger that was the returning child, spouse, parent.

Reader 1: We will remember the young Mennonite men who went to war because they felt they had no better alternative, and returned to their families and churches, only to be completely and utterly lost.

Reader 2: We will remember the waste, the stupidity of war.

Reader 1: And we will remember peace.

Reader 2: And we will remember so that we will always know that there is always a solution preferable to war.

Reader 1: And we will remember so that we will not take peace for granted.

Reader 2: And we will remember so that we will begin to help heal the victims of war: the refugees, the land, the returning soldiers, the families, the children, the rejected.

Reader 1: And we will remember so that we will work for peace, wherever, however we can.

Reader 2: And we will remember so that we will not see war again.

Reader 1: We are caught in the middle.

Reader 2: We must somehow remember, and respect the efforts, the lives and deaths that have been given to grant us a measure of safety, security, and freedom.

Reader 1: Yet we must also remember how misguided and futile those efforts were.

Reader 2: We are asked again to accept the person without condoning the action.

Reader 1: We are asked to prevent such tragedies from happening again.

Reader 2: And so we, the pacifists, the peaceful people, have a calling to remember:

Reader 1: To remember Bosnia, and Cyprus, and Israel,

Reader 2: the Gulf War, with its smart bombs and civilian involvements; and Viet Nam, and Korea.

Reader 1: World War II; Pearl Harbor, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Auschwitz, the Holocaust.

Reader 2: World War I: Ypres, Passchendale, poison gas and killing mud.

Reader 1: The Russian Revolution: the bandits, the famine, the executions.

Reader 2: The War of 1812,

Reader 1: back into the earliest days.

Reader 2: We remember.

Reader 1: We remember our mistakes.

Reader 2: We remember and we ask for forgiveness.

Reader 1: We are caught in the middle.

Reader 2: We are caught between the God of Peace and the world of war.

Reader 1: The world demands that we remember and respect, and perhaps reverence the young "heroes" who fought, and who died for our freedom.

Reader 2: God asks that we remember, and respect, those who worked, and who died for peace...and God invites us to join that number.

Reader 1: Remembrance Day.

Reader 2: And we cannot say we remember unless we work for peace.

Linda Ens (Canada), . Mennonite Church Canada
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