

2021-11-14 ... Remembrance Day speech by Sir John Talbot's School

Mr Stonall

As we come together on Remembrance Sunday, it can bring together feelings of ambivalence. No person enjoys war; we all know the cost in lives, the devastation it causes to cities, destruction of landscapes and grief. We know about the collateral damage, the indiscriminate slaughter, the unintended victims and the losses brought about in error. News bulletins bring us word of chaos, privation and disease that come in the wake of war, from the ravaged lands, the dispossessed, the fearful and the furious. And yet, men and women are sent to fight and go in our name.

For as long as soldiers fight in our name, for as long as they give their lives, for as long as they returned wounded, for as long as their families grieve, we must honour them for their sacrifice, support them in their need, and comfort them in their suffering.

Lily D

As part of the Remembrance Day project at Sir John Talbots this year we looked at different groups of people who were impact by World War One. There was a focus on our local History, looking at the local men who fought, names which are remembered here at St Alkmunds Church and also at our school. We also looked at those who stayed on the Homefront, both the men and women who undertook essential roles to keep the country running.

Cory

Students also looked at the women who volunteered in France at the medical stations, supporting the armed forces. In addition, we watched clips from documentaries at the soldiers from the Empire. We considered who they were and why they found for Britain, and the sacrifices they made for a country that wasn't their own. Rhiannon and Callum are going to share 2 poems which were written by students to remember those who died in World War One.

Rhiannon

Still, We Had Hope by River in Year 7

Remorseless gunshots ricocheted off the protection of metal,

The fallout surrounding me from the mustard gas attack,

Rotten flesh everywhere, smothering the trenches with a stench,

Lifting the spirits of soldiers sang a lone serene bird, whose song floated on the breeze

Still, we had hope.

The regurgitated images suffocated me,

They reminded me of him.

The happier memories still fixed in my heart,

Still, we had hope.

To the rise of a new day, we cherish the red poppy,

We guard the friendships we made and pray for tomorrow

And yet, they still had hope.

Callum

The Red Poppy by Poppy in Year 9

Red poppies grow and bloom,
To dedicated the days of doom.
The soldiers in the battle we mourn,
Who fought endlessly from dusk to dawn.
Hoping that we don't run out of time,
And waiting for Big Ben's chime.
As families say their last goodbye,
Planes hum through the sky.
With grief and sadness we are met,
Remember it well, lest we forget.

2021-11-14 ... 10.55am Remembrance Sunday Sermon ... Revd Canon Judy Hunt

Micah 4: 1-5

'Still we had hope'

There was one line in particular that struck me from what we've just heard: "And still we had hope ..."

I would guess that wasn't true of all those in the battlefield – or even in the hospitals ... Some understandably lost hope ... became hopeless and despair took hold. But we do know that it was true of some – that some kept hold of hope.

What gave them hope?

For some, it would centre on seeing their loved ones again – and that had to depend on staying alive and winning the war.

For some, it would be the hope engendered by feeling that they were making a positive difference – that things would be better in the future because of what they were doing.

For others, their Christian faith would be central in giving them hope – that no matter what they were going through, Jesus was alongside to support and that evil would never ultimately triumph over good. That's partly what the Bible reading from Micah is about – a vision, a hope of a better world

I doubt that any of them went along with the phrase "Let's just hope for the best ..."
They knew that action was needed too. Whatever was giving them hope – for all it

involved a better future – whether for themselves or for their loved ones or their country. And this hope was keeping them going in their actions ...

So as we remember them – and as we bear in mind the words of the Kohima epitaph – that their lives were given for our lifetimes – we too need to take action to bring other hopes into reality. We need to be careful that we don't squander what we have been given. There is still the need to combat evil and to maintain peace. There is the urgent need to combat climate change.

What hopes for good do you have today? And what action are you prepared to take to bring those hopes into reality?

In the Lord's Prayer, we pray "Your Kingdom come" – a kingdom of justice, joy and peace – and God invites us to be co-workers in bringing this Kingdom into being.

Amen.