



As we reflect this Anzac Day on all who have given their lives for others, we remember and acknowledge the First Nations Peoples who have walked upon and cared for these lands, seas and waterways for many thousands of years. We acknowledge the continued deep spiritual attachment and relationship of First Nations Peoples to this place and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of Reconciliation. We pray and give thanks for these ancient peoples who have enriched and sustained our continent over all that time. We praise God for the people who nurtured the lands, seas and waterways and now work with all Australians for peace in our country and in our world.

Context of Anzac Day

In 1916, the first anniversary of the landing at Gallipoli was observed in Australia, New Zealand and England and by troops in Egypt. That year, 25 April was officially named 'Anzac Day' by the Acting Prime Minister, George Pearce. Since then it has become a time to remember all of those impacted by war, in the past and in current times. After the interruption to Anzac Services in 2020, due to COVID and the successful 'Light up the Dawn' initiative, 2021 sees the resumption of Services and commemorations across the country. Anzac Day holds significant cultural importance to many Australians as we remember the sacrifice, love and sense of service given by many for the future generations of Australians.

Scripture

A Reading from the Gospel of John (10: 11 - 18)

'I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Reflection

In this Gospel Reading John reminds us that Jesus' death was the ultimate act of love and service for all of humanity. It is also love and service that is at the heart of the Anzac Spirit. It is this spirit that invites us to make brave decisions based in love and service for the good of humanity in our daily lives.

Fr Andrew Hamilton SJ reminds us that in recent years Anzac Day has become associated with power and greatness. He argues that the greatness of ANZAC day is found in the humbling and modest acts of generosity and bravery and that we would be wise to display these values in leadership and daily life.

Air Commodore Mons Peter O'Keefe, the Director-General of Chaplaincy Service of the Air Force for the Catholic Diocese of the Australian Defence Force, asks us to consider the question How do "Catholics individually and as a Church community draw meaning and find hope in catastrophic events that seem to destroy hope?"

He finds his response in embracing the Easter Season, firstly using faith as support and then facing our daily challenges holistically through a lens of hope in Christ which can assist us in both personal and collective growth. He further suggests that if Catholics authentically think about the paradoxes of war; such as the way that the suffering and death of young men in a lost battle can be seen as a life giving event, they are taken to a place where they can feel God's presence in all situations.

Is there Sacredness in the humanness of war? Air Commodore O'Keefe certainly believes there is "ANZAC can be broadly described as sacred, even though it is a human event, as are all human events sacred. Why? Because God walks in and is a present to us through every human event within our imperfect world". As parents, we and our children will have many Sacred moments with our children. The moment when the tantrum ends and a tired, scared human emerges seeking comfort and love. It is in these moments we can feel the presence of God. Anzac day, similar in some ways to parenting is full of honour and pride, even though the journey is not at all easy. As people of faith we believe each of these moments matter to God, and there is a sense of the sacred when we take time to reflect on these in a personal way.

Prayer

Adapted from Anzac Day Commemorative Committee

Eternal Lord God,

We pray for the peace of the world. We pray for those who have been made homeless or refugees due to war. We pray for those who have been dispossessed and have lost their employment and those whose families have been disrupted and who mourn the loss of loved ones.

Grant our leaders with bravery and humility so that peace and love can be the focus for all people.

We ask for this through Christ our Lord,
Amen

Call to Action

- Join a Service or March this year. Many schools are connected to a particular service and March.
- Reflect with your family what does peace look like in your home.
- Research the story of a family member who may have been involved or impacted by war.
- Volunteer: Check out with your family <https://www.centacarefnq.org/projects> to look at how your family may assist local refugees who have often been impacted by war.

References

Fr Andrew Hamilton SJ Catholic Outlook, 20 April 2020

The Anzac Event through the eyes of faith <http://military.catholic.org.au/anzac-day/>