

TAPE - Angelus

November 11th 1918, Armistice Day - exactly 50 years ago today, since the end of World War One, an event which in each of these years has been marked by a day of remembrance in Britain, the Commonwealth & the United States. We remember and pray for those who gave their lives for their countries, for freedom, in a horrible war which was to end all war. But it was followed by a Lost Peace and a Second World War in which many more young men and innocent civilians were killed, in the name of freedom, democracy, peace, unconditional surrender. We remember and pray. Their sacrifice of life has not brought real peace or justice to the world, because men haven't really changed, national pride and ambition is still with us, even if leaders are now a bit more cautious about committing their people to open war. There is a strong revulsion

in many countries, against war, the kind of war the 20th century has spawned: how much of it is real - not a mere spineless pacifism that would care nothing for justice; not a mockery of peace or sincerity or justice which uses & advocates violence to demonstrate the immorality of violence & war; not a myopic treachery which only opposes one side of a conflict and conveniently forgets the atrocity, the suffering caused by the side they support as well as by the very fact of war itself. Where are the real peace-makers, who hunger & think after justice? As we remember & pray for those who have died in battle, let us pray too that mankind & we ourselves may learn from their sacrifice & bravery, learn that real peace is not a slogan, but something to be worked for and something that will always elude us unless & until men's hearts & minds are changed by a love which makes all of us brothers in Christ, sons of our Father in heaven. OUR FATHER, PRAYERS.

Dunstable Requiem

For a prayer in music, listen again this week to part 7 Dunstable Requiem - the final prayer "In paradisum". The peace of this whole prayerful work, completed just after the 2nd World War, in 1947, expresses a Christian view of death, which itself is condemnation of the noise and turmoil of war.

That their deaths may not have been in vain. This is Human Rights year, and at the beginning of the year, Pope Paul made a plea that it should also be a Year of Peace. The two are obviously related - and also related with the cause for which men have died in two world wars, and are dying today in smaller but no less horrible wars in many places round the world, including Vietnam. Today is also the anniversary of the Rhodesian seizure of independence - which has made a further sore point in international relations, just one more complex problem where peaceful solution is proving difficult to find, while on the sidelines, nations & their leaders, liberals and anti-war parties are calling for a quick & effective settlement - by force of arms! One is reminded of the refrain of a popular 'peace' song: 'when will they ever learn, when will they ever learn'. But let's not rest in too condemn; for the seeds of war and conflict are within each of us - it's only when they've been nourished (consciously or not) that strife begins - seeds of prejudice & hatred & selfishness, whether national, political, religious, racial.... We pray for peace, and applaud any move that can reduce international tension and suspicion: but we've also got to be men, and women, of peace. And

that news, fundamentally, having the mind and heart of Christ in the world we live in. Don't forget, He was put to death violently, died to bring all men together in one family of God. But He also didn't hesitate to drive money-lenders and extortionists out of the Temple, with some severity. Christian ideas about war have naturally been developing over the centuries, in the effort to be faithful to Christ in different circumstances. Let's not forget that, though nowadays we might repudiate the military campaigns which the Crusades developed into, some of the earliest Christians, closest in time to Christ, saw nothing incompatible with their new faith in military service in the Roman Empire. Perhaps some of these thoughts may make us realize that the issue of the morality of war is a very complex, vexed question: it was brought up, you remember, without any very clear solution, at the 2nd Vatican Council. It should also recall that 'peace at any price' is no real peace or justice at all. While working for peace among men, especially in our own part of the world, in our own lives, let's remember our success will always depend on how much we are united with Christ's love & care for all men.