

## **SERVICE FOR VJ DAY IN BARLBOROUGH**

Heaviness may endure for a night:

**But joy comes in the morning.**

God has been our refuge and our strength:

**A present help in time of trouble.**

This year, Saturday 15 August marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of the day when Victory in Japan was declared, bringing the Second World War to a decisive end. It is a day for us to offer thanksgiving to God for the defeat of a cruel and oppressive regime that had terrorised and dominated south-east Asia, and for the courage and steadfastness of the Allied Forces, who fought against a determined enemy on land, on and beneath the seas, and in the air, to conclude the war and to restore peace in the Far East. It is also a day for us to remember the forty to fifty million people who died during the Second World War, which was not only the bloodiest conflict, but also the largest war, in history, in which over 580,000 British and Commonwealth service personnel were killed. Throughout the war, the Imperial Japanese Army and their allies showed immense brutality and engaged in numerous atrocities against civilians, as well as prisoners of war, especially those detained after the fall of the British stronghold of Singapore.

Let us now acknowledge before God the heavy price that was paid by those who died in combat, by those

who were tortured and died in the prison camps, and by those who survived the war in south-east Asia, but with lifechanging physical or mental injuries. Let us honour their courageous sacrifice, which they made in a gallant effort to restrain evil and to secure freedom for succeeding generations.

Remember, O Lord, the fallen in battle, the tortured and the maimed, and the innocents who died. Remember your people, who cry to you in their grief and sorrow. Remember your power to heal and save; and all for your tender mercy's sake. **Amen.**

### **Zechariah viii, 3–8 The prophet's vision of people living safely and at peace**

Thus says the Lord: I will return to Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; Jerusalem shall be called the faithful city, and the mountain of the Lord of hosts shall be called the holy mountain. Thus says the Lord of hosts: Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with staff in hand because of their great age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets. Thus says the Lord of hosts: Even though it seems impossible to the remnant of this people in these days, should it also seem impossible to me, says the Lord of hosts? Thus says the Lord of hosts: I will save my people from the east

country and from the west country; and I will bring them to live in Jerusalem. They shall be my people and I will be their God, in faithfulness and in righteousness.

### **Address**

Zechariah's prophecy of a fresh start, of a time of national reconstruction, and of an opportunity to build a new kind of society, finds echoes in many of the speeches that were made at the end of the war. In his victory speech on VE Day in May 1945, Churchill had said: 'we must begin the task of rebuilding our health and homes, doing our utmost to make this country a land in which all have a chance, in which all have a duty, and we must turn ourselves to fulfil our duty to our own countrymen ...'

The years after 1945 were focused not only on rebuilding what had been destroyed, but also on realising a new vision of the future. As we celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, our society faces the challenge of recovering from the damage inflicted by the coronavirus pandemic. Perhaps the most loved of all the post-war reforms in Britain was the creation of the National Health Service by Nye Bevan who, in a speech in 1959, just over a decade after its launch, said: 'I'm proud about the National Health Service. It is a piece of real Socialism. It is a piece of real Christianity too, you know.' In recent months, as the

coronavirus has swept through the country, the NHS has become the focus of renewed admiration and respect. This is why I decided that our scarecrow as part of the festival would this year be a tribute to the NHS and all who work in it from cleaners and porters, lab technicians, nurses and doctors who have been literally risking their lives to care for us and our loved ones during the pandemic.

After the Second World War, our government was inspired to undertake a huge social reform, creating the welfare state with the NHS at its heart. I pray that as we emerge from the pandemic this year that the same vision and vigour will help us to create a fair society, reflecting that vision of the prophet Zechariah written 2500 years ago: Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with staff in hand because of their great age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets... They shall be my people and I will be their God, in faithfulness and in righteousness.

### **Act of Remembrance**

They shall grow not old,  
as we that are left grow old;  
age shall not weary them,  
nor the years condemn.

At the going down of the sun  
and in the morning,  
we will remember them.

10.58am - Last Post  
11am – 2 minutes silence  
Reveille

### The Kohima Epitaph

When you go home  
tell them of us and say,  
for your tomorrow  
we gave our today.

Let us pray that God's will may be done on earth as it is  
in heaven, as we join our voices together and say the  
prayer that Jesus taught us:

**All Our Father...**

### ***An Act of Commitment***

As we remember today the passion and desire to build a  
new world after the Second World War, it seems fitting  
to end this service by committing ourselves to the work  
that lies before us, so that our community can be

renewed and made strong once more through the grace  
and power of the Holy Spirit.

Teach us, good Lord, to serve thee as thou deservest; to  
give and not to count the cost; to fight and not to heed  
the wounds; to toil and not to seek for rest; to labour  
and not to ask for any reward, save that of knowing that  
we do thy will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### ***Final Collect***

Ever-living God, rejoicing in the example of those who  
have gone before us, we pray that, like them, we may  
work tirelessly for the coming of your kingdom and for  
that justice which brings true and lasting peace, in the  
name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

### ***The Blessing***

God grant to the living, grace; to the departed, rest;  
to the Church, the Queen, the Commonwealth,  
and all people, peace and concord;  
and to us and all his servants, life everlasting;  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
come down upon you and remain with you always.  
**Amen.**

### ***The National Anthem***