

The Commemoration of the faithful Departed



The Day of the Dead, 1859
William-Adolphe Bouguereau 1825-1905

Whatever your views about life, death and life after death, there has always been a human desire, or even need, to remember, to commemorate those who we have loved and who have now died. It is as natural as breathing the air around us, and it is common in all cultures and every continent.

In November, we start a season of remembrance. All Saints' Day is officially 1st November, but we celebrate it on Sunday 31st October and All Souls' Day on 2nd November. This is followed up by Armistice Day on Thursday 11th November and Remembrance Sunday on 14th November.

This two-week celebration has different moods and nuances. All Saints' is a time for appreciating the men and women whom we now regard as saints or martyrs and those who have not been formally canonised but whose life and work remains wonderfully good and worth our study and consideration as examples for our own lives.

On Sunday 31st October, we will have our annual service of Commemoration for those whose funerals have taken place in the 12 months or so. We will be asking for support for this service as we hope to provide refreshments after the service for about 80 people. Can you make cakes or scones etc.? See Joan Bird.

Then on Tuesday 2nd November we will come to a sung Mass for All Souls, the faithful people of God who we will remember by name and pray that they may know the love and peace of God for ever. Oddly, last year although many people wrote names down for the prayers, hardly anyone of them actually came to be part of the service and hear the name read out. It might be a good idea to be there, if possible, don't you think?

Armistice Day has made a recent return in the popular imagination after many years of war remembrance being made solely on Remembrance Sunday. Last year, some 60 or so people went to the Greenford War Memorial at 11am and heard the Exhortation, last post, prayers from me and a rousing speech from Stephen Pound MP.

Remembrance Sunday is perhaps the climax for the wider community as far as remembrance goes. At the Greenford War Memorial, a high attendance is always anticipated and the atmosphere is warm, positive and full of gratitude for those who made and continue to make the supreme sacrifice. I hope that find satisfying experiences this year.

