

Our war dead must not fall into the trenches of our collective failing memory

November is an important month of remembrance for Catholics and the Church. It starts with the solemnity of All Saints followed, on the next day, by 'The Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed' – or All Souls as we call it. In many countries families visit graveyards and cemeteries in order to pray for and adorn family graves with votive candles, flowers, pictures and incense. Polish cemeteries are a sight to behold, often described as a 'sea of light' to remember the dead.

At the eleventh hour on the eleventh day of the eleventh month, we remember the fallen of our wars. The Armistice, an agreement that ended the fighting of the First World War ahead of peace negotiations, began at 11am on 11 November 1918. Armistice is Latin for to stand (still) arms. We also pay our respects to the Armed Forces family on Remembrance Sunday.

Reflection: 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Today, the thirty-second Sunday of ordinary time, the church encourages us to learn and appreciate the virtues of generosity and hospitality. As Christ generously offered himself for our salvation, she reminds us that we, too, must be generous to others. One theme common to the readings of this Sunday is generosity and trust in Divine Providence. In our first reading, Elijah, the prophet of God, tested the widow of Zarephath's generosity and faith. Like *Oliver Twist* (of Charles Dickens' 1838 famous novel), Elijah kept asking for more. However, despite the widow's poverty, she was generous to him. Fear of the future is one of the greatest enemies of generosity and prosperity. Elijah knew how afraid the widow was. Indeed, her fear was genuine. That is, given the circumstances beyond her control at that moment. So, Elijah started by addressing and calming her anxiety: *"Do not be afraid! Then, he prophesied to her: 'For the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'The jar of flour shall not go empty, nor the jug of oil run dry...'"*

Indeed, this prophecy was fulfilled in the widow's life, and she lacked nothing afterward. Her faith and trust in God's word, and of course, in Divine Providence never failed her. Instead, her situation changed and improved beyond her expectations. Her life was transformed from penury to plenty, from misery to luxury, and from poverty to prosperity.

The second reading also highlights Christ's generosity. With trust in His Father, He generously offered himself as *"a holy and living sacrifice"* (Rom 12:1). What he offered or lost generously through his suffering and death, He victoriously gained through his Resurrection and Ascension. This was God's supreme reward to Christ for His supreme generosity.

The gospel is similar to the first reading. Also, trusting in Divine Providence for her survival, the widow offered everything she had. She was generous because she knew and trusted the God she served. By placing her entire trust and future in God's hands, she conquered her fear of the future and the instinct of self-preservation. There are many lessons for us in today's readings. First, all the figures in our readings were generous. Second, they all trusted in Divine Providence. They teach or remind us of these simple principles of generosity and prosperity: *"Givers, never lack" and "Blessed is the hand that gives, and a hand that receives."*

Dear Fathers

Dear Deacons

I would be very grateful if you would share the following information with your parishioners over the coming days. It is important not to overlook the impact that a personal letter can have on the understanding and attitude of our members of parliament, particularly if people feel able to refer to their own experience. It can be an effective way of influencing our representatives' decision-making on this important issue:

Assisted Suicide Bill Resources

The CBCEW website has been updated with a raft of resources for your people to be informed regarding the assisted suicide legislation that is currently working its way through Parliament. This link will take you to the relevant page on the website: <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/opposing-assisted-suicide/>

The posters on the webpage are also attached and have QR codes. This first poster, links to the Right to Life UK website. It provides a simple digital form and suggested letter that helps Catholics contact their MP to ask them to stop assisted suicide being rushed into law. The second poster links to the assisted suicide resources page on the Bishops' Conference website (link above) where you will find resources laying out the Catholic position on assisted suicide, and what you can do to stop its legalisation.

With my prayers and kindest wishes.

Yours devotedly in Christ



XBernard Longley

Archbishop of Birmingham



Parish of St. Gerard, Castle Vale
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and St Mary and St John's)
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THIRTY SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

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Remembrance Day

Almighty and merciful God, graciously keep from us all adversity, so that, unhindered in mind and body alike, we may pursue in freedom of heart the things that are yours.

Mass Times

Sunday 9th November Thirty Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Mass 10.00am for the Sweeney
family RIP and Campbell family
RIP

Monday 11th November

Mass 10.00am for Bricknell and
Flaherty families RIP

Tuesday 12th November

Mass 10.00am for Elaine and
Tommy Fowler RIP

Wednesday 13th November

Mass 10.00am for Cath and John
Dunleavy RIP

Thursday 14th November

Mass 10.00am for Jim Whelan
and Bill Hickin RIP

Friday 15th November

School Mass 9.00am for Mary
Bradbury RIP

Saturday 16th November

Mass 5.00pm for Marjorie Burke
and Jean Mooney RIP

Sunday 17th November Thirty Third Sunday of Ordinary Time

Mass 10.00am for Timmy Miller
RIP



Parish Mission Statement

We, the members of St Gerard's R.C. Church, are baptised in Jesus Christ, empowered by the spirit, nurtured in community, and nourished by prayer, word and sacrament. Therefore, for the greater glory of God, we proclaim for all people the saving message of the Gospel, and joyfully share our time, talent and resources, in works of mercy and justice, both within and beyond our parish community.

Blessing of the Graves:

Oscott Cemetery- Saturday 2nd November at 3.00pm

Erdington Abbey- Sunday 3rd November at 1.45 pm

Witton- Sunday 10th November at 2.30 pm

New Hall-Sunday 17th November at 2.00 pm

Rectory Road- Sunday 24th November at 2.00 pm

Dates for the diary:

Thursday 21st November 7.00pm Mass at SS Peter and Paul, Erdington.

Thursday 20th December 7.00pm- Cluster Mass at Erdington Abbey

Offertory 13th October

GA	£109.00	NGA	£85.93	CAFOD	£34.73	Total:£231.66
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Attendance: 74

Offertory 20th October

GA	£73.10	NGA	£51.45	APF	£53.50	Total:£ 178.05
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Attendance: 74

Offertory 27th October

GA	£101.00	NGA	£52.07	Johnson Ass	£45.60	Total:£ 198.67
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Attendance: 73

Offertory 3rd November

GA	£115	NGA	£41.30	Total:£ 156.30
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Attendance: 71

Recently died and those whose anniversaries occur at this time: Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen.

The sick: Sarah Purcell, Theresa Floyd, Pat Bonner, Kath McMullen, Margaret Ludlow, Rose Cogan, Andrew Trueman, Eileen Morrissey, Frances Irwin, George Irwin, Debbie Johnson and all the sick priests of the diocese. May the Lord grant them the healing they require.

Mass Intentions: on behalf of a family member, a friend or a deceased loved one, to remember a birthday or anniversary, envelopes are available at the back of church or email Fr Mathew.

Offertory

As detailed above. Thank you for your continued generosity to our Parish and various second collections of late.