

Jesus hates wars. Jesus hates people fighting each other and killing each other. He hates seeing people suffer, seeing thousands and thousands of people losing loved ones. He hates it when men, women and children lose husbands and fathers, when parents lose sons and daughters. And even more, he hates all the excuses we use, especially when we try to use religion to justify our violence.

And it's not just wars between nations and peoples he hates. He hates it whenever people disagree and argue, whenever families fall out with each other, when teachers have to be cross with their pupils, when bullies terrorise other people in the playground or in the workplace.

But Jesus loves those people who sacrifice themselves for others – young men and women who out of a sense of love and duty will give up their lives for the greater good.

It's the poor widow that Jesus loves – not the rich people giving lots of money for the work in the Temple – but the poor widow giving away her few coins. These few coins represent everything she possesses. It's all she has to live on. She is sacrificing herself for others.

This is what Jesus does. He gives himself away in sacrifice. He doesn't just offer the blood of sheep and goats. He offers his own blood once and for all, and not simply to save us from some military enemy, but to save us from the last and final enemy, the Devil himself.

Jesus wants us to sacrifice ourselves too. He wants us to give ourselves away in love. For a few that might mean grand gestures of self-sacrifice and martyrdom.

For most of us it will mean trying to be sacrificial in all the small things of life.

Like St Thérèse of the Child Jesus always trying to show love and kindness in the ordinary interaction of everyday life.

But this sacrificial living is only possible if we root ourselves in the sacrifice of Jesus.

It's only this sacrifice that takes away our sins, our bitterness and our violence; only this sacrifice that enables us to become the kind, loving people God created us to be.

Share this sacrifice today and become true servants of one another.

Fr Michael