

Exactly 100 years ago thousands upon thousands of young men bade farewell to parents and sweethearts and embarked for the fields of Flanders. My grandfather lost one of his eyes. His two brothers, my two great-uncles whom I therefore never met, lost their lives. There was hardly a family in this land that was not affected by what we sometimes call 'The Great War'. King and country, patriotism, obedience, loyalty, solidarity, sacrifice.

Today's gospel gives us a model for sacrifice, not notice, the sacrifice of priests and clergy *who like to walk about in long robes and to be greeted obsequiously*, but the sacrifice of the widow whose sole contribution is one penny. And as Jesus points out that one penny represents *everything she possessed, all she had to live on*. The widow gives of herself. The widow holds nothing back.

The role of priests and clergy is to use signs and symbols to represent this ultimate sacrifice, to represent humanity at its best, to give ourselves away for God and for one another. But Jesus takes this to a wholly new level. Jesus doesn't just use signs and symbols. Jesus uses his own precious blood.

To glorify war is a blasphemy, to romanticise war is stupid and ignorant. And Remembrance Day should not be about military parades and march pasts. Remembrance Day, at its best, is about tapping into this sense of sacrifice, not just giving **of** ourselves, but **completely** giving ourselves, body, mind and soul; sharing even in the sacrifice of Jesus, taking on our shoulders even, the faults of many, and playing our own small part in *doing away with sin* and evil once and for all.

When the widow uses the last of her meal and oil to make a scone for Elijah, she experiences a miracle. *The jar of meal was not spent, nor the jar of oil emptied.*

When the soldier risks his own life for love of others, he experiences a miracle.

When you or I try to live our own lives in and from love, totally and completely, we, too, will experience a miracle.

When you or I try to live the Mass, live the sacrifice of Jesus totally and completely we will find ourselves in *heaven itself... In the actual presence of God.*

My soul give praise to the Lord.

