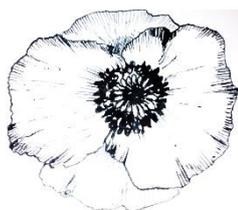


Remembrance & Sacred Spaces

Led Bradley-Stow
Ordinand on placement

I wonder what comes to your mind when you hear the phrase sacred spaces. Perhaps you have images of beautiful places of worship you've visited as a tourist, or spent time in in prayer. Maybe that phrase does little for your imagination, and you struggle to see anywhere as sacred. That phrase may possibly even be painful for you, as we find ourselves back in a state of national lockdown and we find ourselves unable to enter a space that would otherwise be sacred for us.



The Church is currently in the point of its year marked for remembrance, a couple of weeks ago we had all souls day, where Christians remember before God the names of loved ones who have died. We have also marked remembrance day, where, nationally, we are invited to reflect on the sacrifice of the service men and women who lost their lives in combat. It is an in between time, we are not in ordinary time (which is the odd phrase the Church uses for an average Sunday), but we are not quite yet in Advent, the expectant time of watching and waiting for Christmas. We are compelled to remember, to look back at those who have died, as well as forward to what is coming. We are in a liminal, transient place.



This year, however, perhaps this in between time is even more poignant, because the entire country finds itself in what feels like a liminal place. We've gone back into lockdown, but it feels different to before, and we're not quite at the end of the challenge that 2020 has been. The nation is compelled to look back over all that this year has cost many millions of people- emotionally, physically and economically- and also looking forward to a day when lockdown is a memory.

I think one of the things that remembrance and reflection can do to people is that it pushes you to want to find sacred spaces. There becomes the need to be in certain places, quiet, beautiful, meaningful places where we can remember or reflect.

For me beaches, not even specific beaches, are always sacred spaces. For some people it might be a specific spot in the garden. For others mountains are sacred spaces. It could be a graveside, a beautiful church, outside in nature, inside in warmth. The possibilities are endless, because it is so personal to each of us, what will be sacred to us.



Perhaps during this week, during this period of remembrance, during this lockdown, in this liminal and in between place, we could all be challenged to find our own sacred space. Even, perhaps, in the midst of self isolation, loneliness and home sickness, there is an opportunity to seek out something of somewhere new and sacred. A place to be still, a place to be quiet, a place to pray, to meditate, a place to remember and reflect, and a place, if necessary, to grieve.

If this thought for the week has stirred something within you that you'd appreciate help processing, please do contact the welfare team for support or a chat.