



I've got two things right at the top of my urgent list today. One is the writing of this reflection, and the other is the pulling together of what I need for my small part in leading the D-Day Commemorations in Ipplepen tomorrow. There is perhaps a connection between these two - see what you think.

The little planning group for D-Day was initially unsure what to call the time tomorrow when local people will gather at the war memorial and walk up to the Church for a brief time together - walking to the sound of the church bells ringing. The 80th Anniversary of the D-Day landings in Normandy is an accurate description of what the day is about, but it doesn't convey quite enough. We found we were left with two words "Remembering" and "Reflection". We were aware that there are still some individuals and families for whom 'remembering' means something real, personal and powerful - but as the years have gone by - this is naturally a diminishing number. The word 'reflection' can I think be more inclusive - something everybody can be part of - young and old - those with personal memories and connections, and those without. And that's important for what we hope will be a community event.

The simplest description of the word 'reflection' is 'thinking about' - and I hope that the commemoration on 6th June will have time and space to help people do just that. But I think that we need more than a thinking exercise. We need the opportunity for everyone to find a way of engaging with the past, so that we can process it in the present, and thereby commit the best we have for the future of our beautiful but troubled world. Somehow - the pain and suffering of the past must lead to hope and promise for the future. The exhibitions in the Church are aimed to help us walk in the shoes of those with stories to tell from the past, and to use what we learn from them to work for change towards a more just, equal and loving society. If the horror and destruction of the past is not to be perpetuated, we need to allow ourselves to be changed. Wise thoughts are all very well - but only wise actions, unselfishness and generosity can build a better world.

The same might have relevance for the way we approach these reflections week by week. Thinking about the Sunday Gospel reading or the theme that it suggests is great - we can all grow in wisdom and understanding. But we need to allow our reflection to take us further - to engage with the stories from the Bible and with those who have written them - because then we will meet with our loving God, who will change us more and more into his likeness - give us the strength to change the way we choose to live - and through that, to change the world he has given us to safeguard and care for. Our faith is not only about knowledge and understanding, but about the way we live our lives - and about whether we are willing to let God live in them.