

## Thought for the Week – Ed Tomlinson

In recent years Remembrance Day services have taken on a much greater significance for me. A lot of this is probably because I now have a son who is serving in the army. I did find the BBC services this year particularly moving and well put together. Collectively they took us back to a very dark period in our recent history that our parents and grandparents were all too familiar with. They had to battle through it and persevere through all the difficulties, restrictions and loss of loved ones whether in service or simply civilians who were targeted unmercifully or were simply collateral damage as we now euphemistically call it!

It certainly puts into perspective what we are going through now with Covid 19, our very real and ongoing war against a virus which strikes indiscriminately and the examples of courage and faith from previous dark times are thankfully there to encourage us and help us get through it. It's easy to start being discouraged and to ask where is God in all this but the answer that comes through again and again is, we don't know why God allows these things to happen but he will be in the difficult times with us and if we keep our faith we can lean more heavily on him and he will see us through it.

Faith is a big word here and it was covered in some depth in a recent daily reading from Nicky Gumbel and Holy Trinity Brompton. It started with Faith as "Trust when under attack" and a lovely quote, "Faith is the bird that sings when dawn is still dark" (Sir Rabindranath Tagore) Then it continued with Faith as a choice we can make and the Mnemonic *Forsaking All I Take Him*. It then reminded us that faith requires perseverance to keep believing through the hard and difficult times. We had another nice Mnemonic *Feeling Afraid I Trust Him*. I love this one as there have definitely been times this year when I have felt afraid both for myself and for my friends and family. As Andy said last Sunday these are the times when we should look up in faith and trust. And then there is "Faith as Expectancy," a mysterious surge of confidence that God will perform a mighty work. Although it's difficult sometimes we have to keep believing that God can turn our weaknesses into strengths by the power of his spirit working in us. Finally, another quote, "Faith is not a shelter against difficulties, but belief in the face of all contradictions" (Paul Tournier)

So, my prayer for us all this next week is, *Heavenly Father we bring to you each day all our fears and anxieties and the challenges that lie ahead. Help us and encourage us to keep trusting in you and to lean more heavily on you not as a last resort when our strength fails but as an instinctive first call as we seek your help and guidance in all situations. Amen*