

Dear Friends,

As I write this I am thinking about all the things we will be doing in our Churches in November. November is traditionally the month of reflection and remembering. On Sunday 1st Nov we are celebrating All Saints day in the Church; this is when we remember and honour all of the great “saints”, from the apostles, to more modern day Saints such as Oscar Romero. These Saints are people whose lives have inspired Christians for centuries with their faith filled Christian witness and self-sacrifice. But we are also celebrating all people of the faith whose lives and work exemplify what it means to be a Christian; people that we have looked up to and been guided by, and who now rest in Christ.

We are also commemorating All Souls when we remember our loved ones that have departed this life. This is a remembrance of all those we love that have died, and we see them no more. We will be holding an All Souls Service at 3.00pm on Sunday 1st November at St Michaels Aynho. This annual service of reflection is quite emotionally moving; because it is bitter/sweet to spend time deliberately thinking about our loved ones who have died, and giving thanks to God for their lives. But as hard as it is, we would have to agree that there never was a truer saying than “it’s better to have loved and lost, than never to have loved at all”! But it’s painful.

On the 8th November we have Remembrance Sunday. There will be Services in all of our Villages to remember with pride and gratitude those men and women who died in past conflicts, whose sacrifices have secured our freedoms and liberty. We will never really know just how much they sacrificed for us all. May they rest in peace.

So as we are in the season for Remembering, and coming towards the end of this year, I wonder what you will be remembering most about this year. Due to family sickness and bereavement’s I have joked recently that 2020 for me has been like the bad year the Queen had that she described as her ‘annus horribilis’!!! I think many folk feel the same. But strangely there has also been much to be grateful for, and dare I say even joyful about as Covid and lockdown forced us all to re-evaluate our lives and change some habits and behaviours that we had held for years, and it has challenged us to live our lives differently. This has not all been bad. This year our common humanity has been exposed, and our need for each other been made painfully obvious, but this is something we can not only reflect on and remember with humility and gratitude, but we can take it forward positively into 2021. God created Humans to live together in mutual respect and harmony, and we have seen this played out in countless acts of kindness, love and sacrifice this year; and this is something well worth remembering isn’t it. God bless you all.

With love Rev Sue.