

November magazine.

“There’s rosemary, that’s for remembrance; pray, love, remember.”
(William Shakespeare - Hamlet IV:5).

We come now to November – the month of remembering. We begin with ‘All Saints’, when we remember the lives of the saints, then ‘All Souls’ when we remember those whom we love and who have entered into eternal glory, and then ‘Remembrance Day’ when we specifically remember those who gave their lives in conflicts to preserve the freedom we enjoy today.

It has been a privilege to facilitate the first two Bereavement Café events at Beadlam Grange in September and October. One of the things discussed recently was the connection music gives us when thinking about loved ones no longer with us, funerals and other occasions in life when a particular piece of music on hearing takes us back like a time machine to an event that is ingrained on our memories. One of my favourite songs is by the country singer Tricia Yearwood who wrote a song called ‘The Song Remembers When’ in which she describes being reminded of a long-ended love affair by a piece of music coming on, when she is standing at a check-out in a supermarket. Hearing the song takes her back and she remembers again the love she lost as if it was the present moment.

What happens when we ‘remember’? Nothing is more mysterious or harder to explain than this thing we call memory, nerve cells with little threads of fibre running down between them, which hold the memories of a lifetime. When we remember, and our memories are triggered by a piece of music or poetry or art, the past and the present are made one in the moment. We reassemble, events and recall those we have loved and put them together again, bring them out of the past and into the present. We may then discover that we can find our true self that is continuous throughout our lives. By using memory and imagination, we can re-member our lives, put them together again, discover the threads;

made from events and relationships, that have formed us, and bind them together and find they form a whole that is beyond the restrictions of time.

In the same way, at every Holy Communion, Christians bring together both past and future; the whole Gospel is re-membered, put together and made present again, in the 'eternal now'. Faith in the saving power of the Holy Communion, creates a sense in which time is transcended, in which faith makes present both the past and the future, which come together in the words, 'Do this in remembrance of me.' In doing this, we can recognise in Christ our true likeness, our humanity, the person God desires us to be, and our prayer is, 'Lord, re-member me, re-fashion me, so that I may share the life of your Kingdom. Remake my life in the shape of your own.' Then, in that moment, Jesus is revealed in time and through Him we have an eternal relationship with God which at that final moment of time, that which we call death, has no power to destroy.

May you find peace in your remembering.... Rev James.