Peace and Quiet in Troubled Times

November 2026

Welcome to this opportunity to give yourself time and space away from the daily tasks, worries and fears which put our minds in turmoil. You are invited to focus on the music, words and pictures. You may find it helpful to read the poems out loud and then to keep silences in between, entering into an oasis of calm, to engage in 'mindfulness'. Each month we explore a different theme, relevant to our common experiences of life and the world around us. We follow the pattern of the seasons of the Church year.

Please click on the underlined text beneath the images to hear the music via YouTube. Please do skip or close any adverts that appear.

The Hope of Peace



November



No sun – no moon
No morn – no noon
No dawn – no dusk – no proper time of day,
No warmth, no cheerfulness, no healthful ease,
No comfortable feel in any member –
No shade, no shine, no butterflies, no bees
No fruits, no flowers, no leaves, no birds
NOVEMBER! Thomas Hood

Thomas Hood's poem appeared on the November page of a gardening calendar. this sentence was written underneath it. 'Remember, November is the time to plant rose bushes, brown twigs looking dead and barren, in the sure hope that, come the Spring there will be new growth and they will bloom.'



https://youtu.be/lDH1XN-RL5w
2 Cellos – Theme from Schindler's list

November is a time of remembering with National and local Remembrance services honouring the memory of those whose lives have been lost in war. Yet every year we meet, united in grief and sadness, against a background of war in various parts of the world. But also in the hope that one day PEACE will break out. In the current desperate times we struggle to find that hope. 'Desperate' means 'without hope' but alongside the grieving and the anxiety, as the wheel of the church year turns we look forward in hope to Advent (Advent Sunday is 29th November). The main message of Advent is hope that light will shine through the darkness we are experiencing.

Remembrance Sunday

November pierces with its bleak remembrance
Of all the bitterness and waste of war;
Our silence tries but fails to make a semblance
Of that lost peace they thought worth fighting for,
Our silence seethes instead with wraiths and whispers
And all the restless rumour of new wars,
For shells are falling all around our vespers,
No moment is unscarred, there is no pause.
In every instance bloodied innocence
Falls to the weary earth, and whilst we stand
Quiescence ends again in acquiescence,
And Abel's blood still cries from every land.
One silence only might redeem that blood;
Only the silence of a dying God.

Michael Guite



Karl Jenkins – Sanctus from The Armed Man, A Mass for Peace
https://youtu.be/AT-wBd0BXFA

Remembrance

In step. Adrenaline pumps to pageant's drum,
November's breath fingers their frames, still they throng,
toes tapping, feet stamping, they're pushed, they push on.
'Old soldiers never die.'
They march.

In step. Women resolute, bosom held high,
Fought shoulder to shoulder or bravely stood by
to raise new generations and mourn and ask, why?
'Keep the home fires burning.'
They march.

In step. Eyes Front! Trust your comrades hold.
In welded embrace, three in step face the foe.
Eyes Left! If you've eyes left … 'Much further to go?'
'There's something about a soldier.'
They march.

In step. To attention, this is their day.
Two minutes, a hot meal, a chat and away,
to the glory you fought for. Four walls. One more day.
'It's a long way from Tipperary.'
They march.

Jess Kerr

Flanders

The soil was rich, thick and dark,
yet autumn after autumn he beheld the same thin harvest,
as though a shadow still lay on the land and sunlight could not
bear to blossom there.



Year on year the ploughing
turned up bones, whole shattered fragments:
dry shards of things – shins and fingers –
an eerie, brittle hoard.

One night he dreamed he worked a whole year long
to riddle through that broken field of bones,
and when he stood and looked they rose up one by one –
young men, tall and straight and fine.

And over them like slow fire crept their uniforms;
their hands and feet slid out and faces formed like wax.
They breathed, they breathed in black and white through rain,
till last of all grew guns against their sides.

And just before he woke he knew what he must do,
as each stood silent looking out at him.
He'd find their stories, he would sift each one –
the gold beneath his field. Kenneth Steven

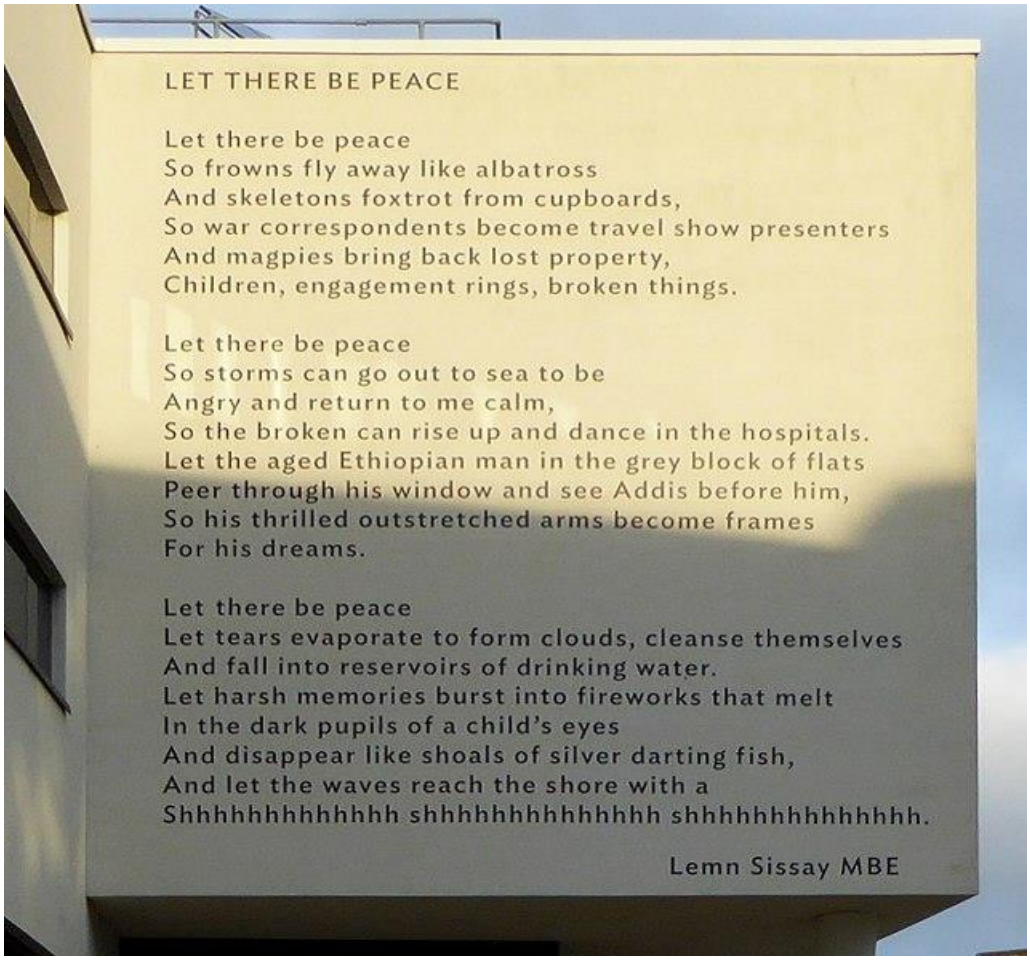




Karl Jenkins – Agnus Dei from The Armed Man, A Mass for Peace
https://youtu.be/DLoSMn6ds40



Lemn Sissay – Let there be Peace
https://youtu.be/kXp8yzY99uw





John Lennon – Imagine
https://youtu.be/907-MBGOk9A

Imagine there's no Heaven
It's easy if you try
No Hell below us
Above us only sky
Imagine all the people
Living for today
Ah, ah, ah-ah

Imagine there's no countries
It isn't hard to do
Nothing to kill or die for
And no religion, too

Imagine all the people
Living life in peace
Yoo-hoo, ooh-ooh

You may say I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope someday you'll join us
And the world will be as one

Imagine no possessions
I wonder if you can
No need for greed or hunger
A brotherhood of man

Imagine all the people
Sharing all the world
Yoo-hoo, ooh-ooh

You may say I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope someday you'll join us
And the world will live as one

John Lennon

A Handful of Light

The main message of Advent is hope and Christmas comes as a festival of light and hope at the time of the year when the nights are longest. In these winter days, we use the memories of bright summer days to sustain us and remind ourselves that there will be days again when the air is warm and the sun high and, despite all the current evidence to the contrary, better days will come. This is a classic expression of hope: though things are tough now, there is an instinct, a belief, an awareness that there is a better world which we will experience sooner or later. Hope is the fuel that has kept many people going when they have had to face the many and various types of darkness that this world can bring.

Sister Stan is an Irish nun who has written a book of daily readings called Gardening the Soul. In her reading for 21 March

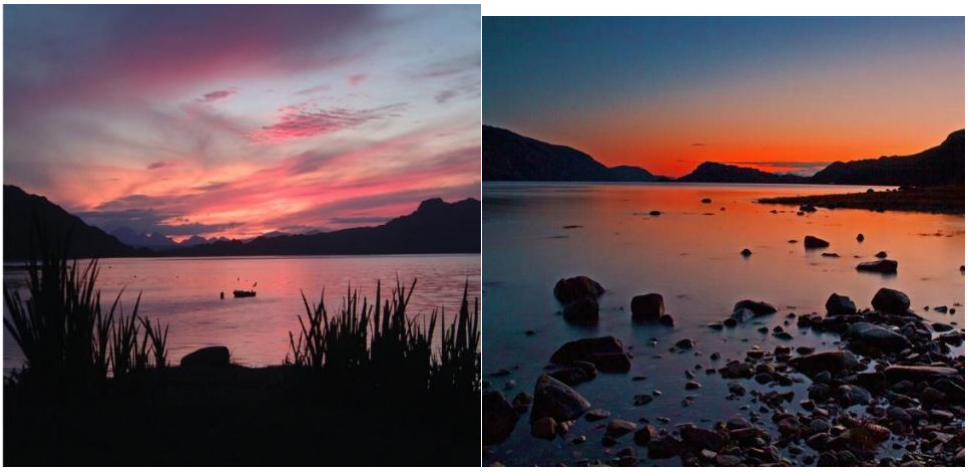
she writes, 'Hope is daring, courageous; it has the audacity to reach a hand into the darkness and come out with a handful of light.' It reminds me of the following saying that I have come across, which I believe goes right back to the first century AD: 'When you light the lamps in the evening, you say to the darkness, "I beg to differ!"' That custom reveals that wonderful human determination not to let the darkness have the last word. Hope is a quality that is not just about a better future. It is a quality that has the power to transform the present moment.

Michael Mitton from his book for reading through Advent - A Handful of Light

The Coming

And God held in his hand
A small globe. Look, he said.
The son looked. Far off,
As through water, he saw
A scorched land of fierce
Colour. The light burned
There; crusted buildings
Cast their shadows; a bright
Serpent, a river
Uncoiled itself, radiant
With slime.
On a bare
Hill a bare tree saddened
The sky. Many people
Held out their thin arms
To it, as though waiting
For a vanished April
To return to its crossed
Boughs. The son watched
Them. Let me go there, he said.

R.S Thomas



Advent

One last, silvered leaf fails to fall
from its tree. A hard year's winter
has frozen your voice.

There you cannot sing –
or rejoice in your listening church
where candles thrill to their endings,
light's brave lovers – gold carols
this dark Advent;
though the sore heart harkening…

and the descant moon,
its cold, pure breve over the earth
like unplayed music.

Carol Ann Duffy



https://youtu.be/iO7ySn-Swwc
O come, O come, Emmanuel – The Piano Guys

Advent Calendar

He will come like last fall's leaf fall.
One night when the November wind

has flayed the trees to the bone, and earth
wakes choking on the mould,
the soft shroud's folding.

He will come like frost,
One morning when the shrinking earth
opens on mist, to find itself
arrested in the net
of alien, sword-set beauty.

He will come like dark.
One evening when the bursting red
December sun draws up the sheet
and penny-masks its eye to yield
the star-snowed fields of sky.

He will come, will come,
will come like crying in the night,
like blood, like breaking,
as the earth writhes to toss him free.
He will come like child.

Rowan Williams

O Emmanuel

O come, O come, and be our God-with-us,
O long-sought with-ness for a world without,
O secret seed, O hidden spring of light.
Come to us Wisdom, come unspoken Name,
Come Root, and Key, and King, and holy Flame,
O quickened little wick so tightly curled,
Be folded with us into time and place,
Unfold for us the mystery of grace

And make a womb of all this wounded world.
O heart of heaven beating in the earth,

O tiny hope within our hopelessness,
Come to be born, to bear us to our birth,
To touch a dying world with new-made hands
And make these rags of time our swaddling bands.

Michael Guite



Muslim, Jewish and Christian
Prayer for Peace

O God, you are the source of life and peace.
Praised be your name forever.
We know it is you who turn
our minds to thoughts of peace.
Hear our prayer in this time of crisis.

Your power changes hearts
Muslims, Christians and Jews remember,
And profoundly affirm,
That they are followers of the one God,
Children of Abraham, brothers and sisters;
Enemies begin to speak to one another;
those who were estranged join hands in friendship;
nations seek the way of peace together.

Strengthen our resolve to give witness to these
truths by the way we live.

Give to us:
Understanding *that puts an end to strife;*
Mercy *that quenches hatred, and*
Forgiveness *that overcomes vengeance.*
Empower all people to live in your law of love
Amen.



Karl Jenkins Benedictus - From The Armed Man, A Mass for Peace

https://youtu.be/EYCkm7i5ZTA