

SOUTHWARK
◆ CATHEDRAL ◆



The Diocese of
Southwark

A Commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of VE Day

Friday 8 May 2020
12.00pm

The Most Exciting Experience of My Life

Six long years of war, weeks of waiting, excitement and longing had passed and at last peace was declared. I think that it was almost impossible to describe the feeling of relief it brought with it. At last there would be no worrying about the safety of relations and friends in the forces, no bombs, buzz bombs, rockets or news of the horrible suffering of occupied Europe. Yes, at last it was all over and we could relax and celebrate.

About twelve members of my family met, and after a marvellous supper, we caught a bus to Piccadilly Circus. The streets were overflowing with happy, carefree crowds singing and dancing. Most of the houses were bedecked with the flags of all nations and enormous VE for victory signs. It was getting dark and people made the excuse to switch on as many lights as possible to make up for the blackouts of the previous long months and years.

We alighted at our destination and immediately became surrounded by milling mobs of people, young and old, all adorned with big red, white and blue rosettes and waving multi-coloured flags. Rockets were frequently ascending into a now dark sky and bursting in a blaze of coloured lights above our heads. An aeroplane in the emblazoned sky seemed to be giving its crew a good aerial view of the City by swooping, reeling and performing extraordinary acrobatic stunts so that I was amazed at the way it avoided crashing into some of the taller buildings.

The crowds became so dense that it was with relief we escaped into a side street for a breathing space. We then discovered that we had lost four of the party including my mother and father. We waited for them quite a while but when they did not turn up we made our way towards Trafalgar Square. Nelson's Column was illuminated by searchlights and the surrounding buildings were all floodlit. One very gay sailor

had his trousers rolled up above his knees and was having a marvellous time wading in the fountain and kicking the water over the spectators.

The illuminations gave the most lovely blue effect, and the searchlights, advertisements and rockets showed up to perfection in the lovely warm summer night. When we could drag ourselves away my cousin decided to direct us to 10 Downing Street to try and get a glimpse of Mr Churchill. On our way there, we heard a voice coming from many loudspeakers. People began to run, including us.

Suddenly we came upon a crowd of people gathered round the Home Office, and on looking I saw Mr Churchill, accompanied by his small grandson on a balcony which was decorated with an enormous Union Jack. A hush fell on the crowd as we all listened to what the great man had to say. At the end of his speech a small band below struck up with “For He’s a Jolly Good Fellow”. The response was terrific. The night was filled with the voices of us all and for minutes afterwards our cheers rang out. When at last Mr Churchill left the balcony we began to wander back towards Trafalgar Square. The air was full of coloured streamers and rows of us were all marching along arm in arm, all friends, all sharing the same great happiness. Many people made a real night of it as they were unable to get home but at last, very tired yet very happy, we joined a queue for the underground. I shall never forget that journey!

Once the train came in, the people behind simply seethed forward packing the ones in front so tightly, just like sardines, when at last absolutely no more could be crammed the doors were shut. There was only just enough room for my feet so I had to balance over the lucky ones who were seated by hanging onto the straps. After what seemed hours in that crowded stuffy compartment we were able to get off and drag ourselves home. As one of my relations lived only about four

minutes from our flat I went home with them to wait for my parents. About an hour later they turned up after having to walk about half the way.

So the greatest day of my life had ended. It was not only the day itself which has been so stupendous, but the fact that the war with Germany was over and won.

Joyce Thorn
8 May 1945

NB Joyce later became the mother of a little boy, Christopher. Her married name was Chessun.

Greeting and Introduction

All Heaviness may endure for a night:
But joy comes in the morning.

All God has been our refuge and our strength:
A present help in time of trouble.

Dear friends across the Diocese of Southwark and beyond, we have come together on this day to commemorate the 75th anniversary of Victory in Europe, when the sounds of war fell silent on this continent.

We come together at a time when we are fighting another threat to our lives, mindful of those who are today making the ultimate sacrifice, here and around the world.

We gather conscious of our need for God's forgiveness for the sin and the desire to dominate others that leads to conflict between people, and war between nations.

And as we remember the many soldiers, sailors, and airmen who gave their lives restraining evil and opposing tyranny, so we also come in thanksgiving for the years of peace that the nations of Europe have enjoyed since the Second World War.

We gather today, remembering those who gathered on that first Victory day, glad of each other's company, and grateful for the laughter and love that follows times of sadness and loss but we gather from our own homes, distanced, yet united.

So let us pray that God's will may be done on earth as it is in heaven, as we join our voices together and pray as Our Saviour taught us:

All

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

Reading

Luke 15. 18-24

*Read by The Venerable Dr Rosemarie Mallett,
Archdeacon of Croydon*

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to St Luke.

Jesus told them a parable and in telling the story said, “The younger son came to himself and said ‘I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.’ ” So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.” But the father said to his slaves, “Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted

calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!" And they began to celebrate."

All This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Responsory

All Your salvation is near to those who fear you,
that glory may dwell in our land.
Mercy and truth have met together;
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

All **that glory may dwell in our land.**
Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne;
steadfast love and faithfulness go before you.

All Your salvation is near to those who fear you,
that glory may dwell in our land.

Reading

'The Rock cries out to us today' · Maya Angelou

Read by Timothy West.

Today, the Rock cries out to us,
clearly, forcefully,
Come, you may stand upon my
Back and face your distant destiny,
But seek no haven in my shadow.
I will give you no hiding place down here.
You, created only a little lower than
The angels, have crouched too long in
The bruising darkness,
Have lain too long
Face down in ignorance.

Your mouths spelling words
Armed for slaughter.
The rock cries out today, you may stand on me,
But do not hide your face.
Across the wall of the world,
A river sings a beautiful song,
Come rest here by my side.
Each of you a bordered country,
Delicate and strangely made proud,
Yet thrusting perpetually under siege.
Your armed struggles for profit
Have left collars of waste upon
My shore, currents of debris upon my breast.
Yet, today I call you to my riverside,
If you will study war no more.
Come, clad in peace and I will sing the songs
The Creator gave to me when I
And the tree and stone were one.
Before cynicism was a bloody sear across your brow
And when you yet knew you still knew nothing.
The river sings and sings on.

Homily

The Bishop of Southwark, the Right Reverend
Christopher Chessun

Anthem

Greater Love · John Ireland

*Whilst this anthem is played we show a montage of faces from
across the diocese.*

Prayers

*Led by Lotwina Farodoye, the Reverend Stanley Njoka,
Folarin Oginni and Jackie Pontin.*

Trusting the promises of God, and with faith in his mercy,
let us pray to the Lord.

Let us give thanks for the selfless and courageous service and
sacrifice of those who brought peace to Europe, and for the
good example they have given us; let us bless the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

We pray for nations still devastated by war, for their people
and their leaders, and for those who suffer the effects or
memories of past wars; for veterans, for those who mourn,
and for all innocent victims whose lives have been shattered
by the cruelty of others; Lord, hear us.

All Lord, graciously hear us.

Let us give thanks for those who work for peace and liberty
throughout the world, for the Armed Forces of the Crown, and
for all who strive to bring an end to injustice and oppression;
let us bless the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

We pray for those in our own day who have grown weary or
lost hope as a result of violence or terror; for all refugees and
displaced people, and for those who seek to address the causes
of discord and distrust; Lord, hear us.

All Lord, graciously hear us.

Let us give thanks for the reconciliation of former enemies,
for the flourishing of goodwill between them, and for the many
blessings we enjoy as a result of the sacrifices which have made
for peace; let us bless the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

We pray for the young people of our own day and for all who will shape the future of this nation, that they may be inspired by those who have gone before them to serve as they have been served; Lord, hear us.

All **Lord, graciously hear us.**

We pray for all who are serving our nation at this time as we combat the virus which challenges lives and our way of living, that those in the NHS, medical and emergency services and all key workers in this country may be given the strength they need today and that we all may have the hope we need for tomorrow; Lord, hear us.

All **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Lord of life,
hear our prayer,
and make us one in heart and mind
to serve you with joy for ever.

All **Amen.**

Anthem

For the Fallen · Douglas Guest

They shall grow not old as we that are left grow old:
age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning,
we will remember them.

An Act of Commitment

Led by The Bishop of Southwark.

Let us pledge ourselves anew to the service of God and our fellow men and women: that we may help, encourage and comfort others, and support those working for the relief of the needy and for the peace and welfare of the nations.

All **Lord God our Father,**
we pledge ourselves to serve you and all humankind,
in the cause of peace,
for the relief of want and suffering,
Guide us by your Spirit;
give us wisdom;
give us courage;
give us hope;
and keep us faithful now and always.
Amen.

O Lord our God,
as we remember, teach us the ways of peace.
As we treasure memories, teach us to hope.
As we give thanks for the sacrifices of the past,
help us to make your future in this world,
until your kingdom come.

All **Amen.**

The Blessing

God grant to the living, grace; to the departed, rest;
to the Church, the Queen, the Commonwealth,
and all people, peace and concord;
and to us and all his servants, life everlasting;
and the blessing of God almighty,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
come down upon you and remain with you always.
Amen.

All

The National Anthem

God save our gracious Queen
Long live our noble Queen
God save the Queen
Send her victorious
Happy and glorious
Long to reign over us
God save the Queen.

We are grateful to people from across the diocese, and beyond, who have sent in photographs for today's service. Many of them were accompanied by names and stories and clear messages of much pride in what these, our relatives and friends, offered during the Second World War. We honour every one of them. The montage will remain on the Diocesan and Cathedral websites so that it can be viewed again.

'Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and in the morning. We will remember them.'

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Southwark Cathedral has been a place of Christian worship for over 1000 years. Established as a small convent, it grew over the centuries into a priory, which became a parish church and then, in 1905, the Cathedral for the newly created Diocese of Southwark which serves the whole of London south of the river.

The Cathedral's patchwork architecture bears testament to its past as do the many monuments and memorials inside and outside the church. These are reminders of the rich history of this part of London and our association with such major figures in our creative history, including Chaucer, Shakespeare and Dickens.

Southwark Cathedral is a place of worship, welcome and friendship, to rejoice in or find rest when you're weary. We are London's community Cathedral striving to live the example of Jesus, seeking to be a spiritual home for all and set at the heart of Bankside, buzzing with people and activity, a vibrant cultural and commercial destination.

Whatever has brought you here, you are most welcome.