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Why we pay tribute is so vital

For over 60 years, on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month and on the Sunday nearest to it, we have remembered.

We have remembered the number of people who have died in wars and conflicts that have affected many parts of the world.

Remembrance Sunday brings to the attention of this nation the contrast between the terrifying and heartless forces of armed conflict and the lives and destinies of the individual people who are caught up in them.

Living and dying purposefully is at the heart of our remembrance. When we see on thousands of war memorials the names of the fallen beneath the words of Jesus 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends', we come face to face with the wish, the belief, that somehow, apparently pointless avoidable suffering can be given meaning by associating it with the purposeful suffering of Jesus.

We need to say that those who died in the service of their country did so purposely and not in vain - a nation is in a pitiable condition if it cannot say it. And it is to glimpse how God cares for the suffering of people.

For we can begin to see how human suffering is interpreted and given meaning by the passion and resurrection of Jesus.