

## **From War to Peace**

Tomorrow, the 11<sup>th</sup> of November, we will commemorate here as we do each year both the feast day of St Martin in whose name this church is dedicated and Remembrance Day.

As far as I can ascertain no direct connection was made at the time between St Martin and the armistice between Germany and the allied powers at 11 am on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November 1918. For us here, though, it is an interesting and poignant coincidence.

Martin started as a soldier. However, he began to realise that his military life conflicted with his Christian faith. From a man of war he became a man of peace. He swapped his armour of a soldier with the simple robes of a monk and then the crozier and mitre of a bishop. From then on his fight was against evil. His focus was on the mission of the Church and on the monastic life of prayer and service.

Throughout history there have been others who have followed the same path, and for their courage and determination to do God's will we give thanks.

That turning from war to peace is reflected in the well-known passage from the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 2.1-4) that we heard just now. That vision of peace offered by the prophet gives much needed hope in our own world where war and conflict are all too apparent.

Wars are easy to start. In contrast peace can be difficult both to achieve and to maintain. It can be very fragile. For the Christian virtues of peace, justice, respect and love are up against selfish ambition and the desire for power.

As a soldier Martin possessed physical power over others. As a bishop he had a more profound influence over those with whom he came into contact. But that influence was based not on power but on love for those in his charge.

The armistice of 1918 was sadly short lived. Just over twenty years later Europe was again engulfed in war, a war that would result in millions of deaths and injuries. And there are still wars raging today. However, at least armies now have an increasing role in maintaining peace in areas of conflict. Surely Martin would have applauded that aim.

If we can do nothing else we can pray for peace. Often our prayers may appear to be unanswered or even unheard. Yet every now and again there are glimmers of hope. And it is that hope – that hope ultimately in God – that sustains us in our continuing prayer.

10<sup>th</sup> November 2017  
Kingsley Boulton