

MODERATOR'S MESSAGE

ANZAC DAY

"He is not here, he has risen." Mark 16:6

This is surely the heart of Christianity: Jesus risen from the tomb.

The cross is not victorious. The crucifixion of Jesus on the cross is not a Roman victory. The Jewish religious authorities were bewildered and lost. Jesus died on the cross. This then, was all that mattered to both the political and the religious authorities of the time - Jesus is risen.

ANZAC Day is a remembrance and honouring of armed personnel who served in the wars involving New Zealand. Most especially, of our alliance with Australia in these global conflicts. For all our sporting rivalries, Australia remains our nearest and most dependable alliance across many levels of cooperation and defence.

Armed conflict has cost and lost many lives. It is sad and unfortunate when human nature desires to dominate and control. The hope is that we will not revisit these rivalries, conflicts, wars, and that no more lives will be needlessly lost.

Where does Christianity come into the ugly and brutal outcome of war? Faith sustains us and reminds us of our humanity. Diplomacy and statesmanship help us to keep peace and goodwill.

In past wars, German Christians fought Allied Christians. How sad, but it was the reality of their time.

Today, Christians are challenged to fight only for Jesus and for his Kingdom. This is our challenge now – stand up and fight for Jesus. He is risen.

Christianity has a saying that Jesus died for the forgiveness of our sins. On ANZAC Day, we think about the sacrifices made by soldiers for their families to have freedom, justice and equal opportunities.

Jesus is viewed as God's sacrifice for the redemption of humanity. The feelings and atmosphere of Good Friday and ANZAC Day are similar. Battles, deaths, hopelessness and despair. However, there is also that sense of forgiveness, redemption and life. Christ is risen. Death is defeated.

Jesus is not in the tomb. He is risen. This is Good News. Let us rejoice and be glad in it. We honour and remember the men and women who gave their lives for God, King (Queen), country, family... and we find strength knowing that Jesus is risen.

Jesus said, "No greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends." John 15:13

Blessings
Fakaofu

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