

## RECTOR'S PINT

Where were you on 9/11 (11 September 2001) when you heard about the Twin Towers disaster? I was walking down the High Street in Oxford when one of my students ran up to tell me what was happening. And I know exactly where I was and what I was doing that evening in November 1963 when the news came that President Kennedy had been assassinated.

There are some events that burn themselves into our very being. Other anniversaries may be harder to remember, and we may need something to help us. The poem "Remember, remember the fifth of November/ Gunpowder, treason and plot" (apparently based on a poem written in Latin by John Milton – who knew?) has made that date unforgettable, if not the actual year (1605). But are you good at remembering your wedding anniversary, or family birthdays?

When a child is christened (baptised), Simon always asks the parents to bring out the special baptismal candle each year on the anniversary of the ceremony. As the child grows up, that will help them to connect with their baptism, and perhaps to ask questions about what it means. A recent baptism took place on the couple's wedding anniversary, so that should make both events easier to remember!

November is always a month for remembering. Not only "gunpowder, treason and plot", but also the two World Wars and subsequent conflicts, with Armistice Day (the 11th) and Remembrance Sunday (the nearest Sunday to the 11th) being widely observed. This year in Great Haseley the usual Remembrance Sunday ceremony at the War Memorial will be followed by the unveiling of another memorial, to the ten American airmen who died near Latchford on 13 November 1943 when their B-17 Flying Fortress crashed in appalling weather. Members of at least four of the families will be coming over from the United States for a very special time of remembering and giving thanks. These young men, and many like them, volunteered to come and help defend our freedom, and they lost their lives tragically in the process. We owe it to them to honour their memory.

Remembering those who have died helps to anchor our own existence, to give us a sense of where we have come from and where we are all heading. For Christians there is the added assurance that we are held in God's loving embrace, from before the cradle to after the grave. November traditionally begins with All Saints Day, on the 1st, and All Souls Day, on the 2nd, both of them lifting our eyes from this world to the next, and reminding us of future joyful reunions.

Our own tradition in recent years has been to hold a special Service of Commemoration at which the names of loved ones who have died can be read out, and a candle lit in their memory. This year it is on the afternoon of Sunday November 5th (before the fireworks!), in Great Milton. All are most welcome on this lovely occasion.

Remember well!

Toby