Sunday 8th November 2026 –
Third Sunday before Advent/Remembrance Sunday

Today is, of course, Remembrance Sunday and quite rightly we think today of all those who, in time of war and in desperate situations, gave their lives so that we might have the opportunities that life offers us day by day. The sacrifice that they made for all of us is immeasurable. We thank God for all of those who down the years have given their all so that we may have the opportunity to remember – and so we say **'We will Remember them.'**

Having said that there is more remembering that we can do today and our Bible readings prompt us to think widely. St Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, reminds us that Jesus Himself died and rose again and that, through Him, God will bring us all into His kingdom and so we will be with the Lord for ever. This is the 'blessed assurance' that we all need to remember. St Paul in his letter was obviously trying to respond to the fears and concerns of the Thessalonians, young in their faith and trying to understand the difficulties that they faced – rejection, persecution, hatred, probably violence. This is Paul saying remember Jesus knew all those things himself, He faced them, He will be with us in doing it as well. *'Therefore'* he says *'encourage one another with these words.'*

Then we come to the Gospel reading from St Matthew. It is one of Jesus' stories which we call 'parables' because they are always have a special meaning – even double meanings sometimes. The story this time is about the 'Ten Bridesmaids'. I always like to think of it as the story of the five who took precautions and the five who forgot to do so. It avoids the terminology that is sometimes used calling the five who did remember the 'Virtuous Maidens' implying that those who forgot lacked virtuosity which is pretty intolerable really. Mostly it is intolerable because we all, being full of human limitations have flaws one of which is forgetfulness. Anyway, the story is very familiar to us and it possibly sends shudders down our sensibilities. Some of the girls brought a supply of oil in their flasks and some left their flasks behind. It was a genuine mistake and probably one could say that the five who had taken their flasks with them were quite right not to share their oil with those who had run out. But somehow the story just seems a bit harsh. Those who had not taken precautions were kept out of the wedding party but the penalty seems very harsh: *'Truly I tell you, I do not know you. Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.'*

But that is what today is all about – Remembrance. We who believe in the risen, glorified and glorifying Lord are called upon always to that as our vocation, our calling. It is up to us always to keep in mind His sacrifice for us and for everyone and his guarantee that we shall be with Him. It is that which led the prophet Amos to say *let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.* In that there is perfect assurance.

At the going down of the sun and in the morning we will REMEMBER

Crispin White