

**Words of Introduction to the City of Coventry
Remembrance Service in the Memorial Park by
the Bishop of Coventry**

8th November 2009

2009: Remembrance Service, Memorial Park

People of Coventry:

We gather this morning in solemn times, not just to remember past wars - but in the shadow of another war – we remember with heavy hearts the ninety-four brave people of our armed forces who in this last year alone have laid down their lives in the cause of the world's freedom and security in Afghanistan, several of them from our city and our counties, including James Fullarton, whose parents and family are with us today.

And we gather as always in this Memorial Park.

A Park that teaches us to remember well.

In this vast space there are many trees each one dedicated to the memory of a young man who died in the First World War. Take a look at them again this morning and think of those who died then and remember those who have died in war since then. There is a plaque under each tree with one name on it: each name, each tree, standing tall for scores of others who also fell serving their country in war.

It is a park that gives our city space to remember well and also to live well.

Throughout the year this Park is full of sport and festivals and events. But most of all it is full of friends and families, children and the elderly of all backgrounds and races. Look at those around you today and remember that the Park teaches us to live well by building friendships and community with each other.

It is a Park that points us to the future. It is due to be rejuvenated for the benefit of generations to come. It challenges us to think about what we really want for our city and community and world in the future.

This Memorial Park on this day of all days asks of us:

1. Will we remember the *past* well, and especially each unique person who has died in the course of conflict and war?
2. Will we live well in the *present* in a way that that leads to peace and hope in our families, our city, our nation and our world?

3. Will we do all we can to live well in the *future* – both in this life and beyond this life?

So as we remember those who so courageously and selflessly laid down their lives in the course of war, let us dedicate ourselves again to build the world for which they paid the ultimate price: a world of peace and freedom and hope.

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