

This week marked two quite different anniversaries in the history of our nation – the commemoration of ANZAC Day and the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the massacre at Port Arthur. Each of these events, however different they might have been, have had a marked effect on our nation as a whole, and were undoubtedly the focus of much of our attention this week.

ANZAC Day leaves me with conflicting emotions. I deplore violence of any kind – it sickens me to the core. And the history of warfare has proven nothing more to me than just how fruitless and pointless is this sort of violence on a global scale. And yet, as Jesus taught, one of the basic principles of our faith is to stand against those who would rule in their own way with oppression and power. Certainly it is difficult to argue against the blessings of freedom and liberty we enjoy in our own nation; freedom won at a great price through the very conflict that ANZAC Day remembers.

Poets like Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon, and our own Bruce Dawe have often expressed this tension in their work, and I find their words confronting and moving, as they make the point about how men and women made the supreme sacrifice. As Wilfred Owen so provocatively states at the end of a stark and brutal description of how a soldier dies as a result of exposure to poison gas, “Dulce et Decorum est; Pro patria mori. (it is sweet and right to die for your country.)

And yet, we remember. And we give thanks...

Thursday marked the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the day that Martin Bryant killed 35 people at Port Arthur, in an event that led to a radical change in our national psyche, as well as the change to our national gun laws.

In addition to the service of remembrance at the site, there were many other ways in which the occasion was remembered around the country. In Melbourne, the focus was on St. Peter’s Eastern Hill, which has conducted a remembrance service every year since 2006 (the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary). The Archbishop was in attendance this year, and a reading was done by the former Dean of the Hobart Cathedral, the Rev. Stuart Blackler. The focus of the service was the lighting of candles in a special candelabra of candles, donated to the parish for the occasion of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary service.



May Philip and James, Athanasius, and all the Saints walk with you this joyful Eastertide...

*Sam*