Thought for the weak

with the Rev Preben Andersen

Dear Friends,

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I and as Chaplain for Caldicot British Legion may I express my grateful thanks to you all for your support and determination to remember and give thanks indeed for all those lives lost that we today may live. I shall preach the sermon at St Mary's in Caldicot on November 11th and never have I felt more honoured and more determined to include the thoughts and prayers not only of those who fought (or knew people who did), but also of the very many young people here in our community so determined to ensure we never forget.

Did you know that a total of 16 million lives were lost over four years in the First World War alone as 65 million people from 32 countries were drawn into the conflict? And did you know that the one book that was read and cherished and carried everywhere, above all into combat, by people on all sides was the Bible? It is believed that more than 9 million Bibles in 80 languages were translated, printed and sent to members of the Armed forces and to prisoners of war on all sides.

One soldier who survived the war told his family on his return, "I would definitely have been killed were it not for this Bible", and he showed them the shrapnel-damaged Bible which he had held so close to his chest on one particularly ferocious day with bullets flying everywhere. This man was an agnostic – someone who searched for the meaning of life and death but not sure how and where to find it – but he became a regular churchgoer after the war. His Bible, damaged as it was, stayed close to his heart for the rest of his life, but even more important, from its pages he came to know the living Christ.

World War I should have been the war to end them all, but of course it wasn't. Wars still rage today. Thank God therefore that in his living Word, the Bible, we have His Son Jesus to give us hope and comfort, today as ever. God bless you.

Rev Preben Andersen