



ELY CATHEDRAL

# Weekly Reflection

## by Canon Jessica Martin



**10 November 2020**

'Abide in my love', said Jesus.

I was reading through the Evensong readings for Remembrance Sunday, and these were the words which spoke to me. It was that word 'abide'. It just seemed absolutely the right word for now. 'Abide' means, 'sit with it', 'hang on in there' as well as meaning living with something or someone, keeping faith with people, relying on them, being reliable yourself. To abide is to endure – but to endure hopefully, not numbly or fearfully.

I haven't got any adrenalin left for this second lockdown. There might be some spiking at night – when I keep waking with a sense of emergency, right into complete wakefulness, but I don't know why or what it's about – but during the day I can't work up the sense of urgency I had six months ago.

I know many things are urgent. I got into a complete state about the US election, for example. I worry about the bits of my family elsewhere in the country, people I can't visit. But I don't have much to draw upon in the way of spare oomph. It's like that bit of a long walk where all you can do is keep on putting one foot in front of the other.

Every morning, at the moment, Morning Prayer starts with the same words. *In the darkness of this age that is passing away, we say to God, may the light of your presence, which the saints enjoy, surround our steps as we journey on.* It's a dark time of year, heading towards winter, during a year that has been dark in many ways already.

But that's not the whole truth.

Because we can 'abide'. In fact, we can 'abide in love'. Love comes to us in so many ways, in memory and in hope as well as in the good things of the present, both large and small. Nothing is all gloom, and every winter ends with spring.

This is a season for remembering, for blessing people gone from our sight and touch who made us something of who we are now. Those we know – parents and siblings and friends and lovers, teachers and carers, the kindness of strangers, met and then gone. Those who, perhaps, we do not know, or perhaps mourn deeply – the recent dead of whom we are so aware just now, the dead of this pandemic, many of them losing their lives in the service of others. So many people, in so many places in the world.

And the people we honour at Remembrance, the dead of the great wars of the twentieth century. Such a dark time, but out of it came very great gifts to the future, gifts which we have received and been nurtured by – whether by that we mean the National Health Service or the commitment to the democratic process as a check to power and greed. Out of the 'wraths and sorrows' of those wars, enough people decided, strongly enough, to 'abide in love'.

So it seems important to live hopefully. To endure, to 'abide' the dark times, the times through which we are passing today. 'Love one another' said Jesus, 'as I have loved you'. Who knows what gift we might give to the future through the choices we make in this present, if we abide in love, stick with it, hold on tight to it? We don't have to be heroic, but just to keep going. Just to abide. Just to love one another.