



2010

THE LEGACY OF HOPE

Pack for Churches
by





Dear Minister/ Worship Leader,

Thank you so much for your interest in the **Holocaust Memorial Day** pack for churches 2010.

If the horror of the Holocaust – and even *horror* does not seem adequate enough a word to describe the devastation and cruelty – is where we start and finish out HMD services, then we would be guilty of just staring at the gas chambers and crematoria and shaking our heads and weeping. The cries of those who perished call us to move on to turn the despair to hope and the weeping to actions and prayer for a more just and safer world free of prejudice, xenophobia and hate.

This year's theme, **Legacy of Hope** moves us on to reflect radically on the horrors of Genocide. The materials resourced here include pictures and images for PowerPoint display, meditation, poems and narrative. Please use them freely and in as creative a way as you see fit.

The prayers of Confession and Intercession take us to the heart of what it is to be human with its suffering and questioning, fear and vulnerability but, above all, hope.

The call we hear is the **Legacy of Hope**.

David Gifford
Chief Executive
Council of Christians & Jews

Bob Fyffe
General Secretary
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Images of the Holocaust

Over the next few pages, you will find a number of Holocaust related images. The first few are images of the horrors of the Holocaust: piles of glasses, people arriving at Auschwitz and images of hungry children in the ghetto, for example. However, the images which come later on are images of hope: people celebrating the liberation of a concentration camp, a Jewish lady receiving new shoes now she has freedom, the sun poking through clouds. Please feel free to use the images provided to illustrate the theme *Legacy of Hope* in your service, we are also providing a Power-Point Presentation that you might like project as people enter or leave, or alternatively you could use the meditations in this pack alongside the projected images to help illustrate this year's theme to HMD. Perhaps you could time this presentation to music, for instance, Gorezki, Symphony No.3, *Symphony of Sorrowful Songs*. Alternatively, you might like to focus on one particular image and conduct a meditation based on it. Each picture has some brief thoughts, mini meditations to make us consider what happened, and what we can do to prevent it happening again. You are welcome to use these as a base for discussion. For some of the meditations, the author has tried to put herself in the place of those people in the pictures. Whilst one can never know what the people behind the images really felt and witnessed, this is one way of engaging with the Holocaust, though please keep in mind that this might disturb some people and be aware of the psychological needs of your audience when using this material.

Please note that we do not recommend that you use all the images intended to show the horrors of the Holocaust, and suggest that you use no more than three to avoid causing undue distress to those attending your service.



Images of the Holocaust

Auschwitz today: © www.hmd.org.uk





Reflection: Auschwitz Today

Auschwitz today.
The barbed wire fence still stands.
The tower still stands.
The cold dormitories, where once were housed the innocent victims,
still stand.

But thousands suffered here.

Thousands of lives were lost and fell to gas chamber floors.
To walk down this path is to hear the echoes of the past in your footfalls.
But where does this path lead?

The path that once led to destruction is now paved with hope,
and its final destination is a world free from genocide.

By allowing Auschwitz to stand we permit ourselves to remember,
and in remembering we are stirred to action.
By walking in the footsteps of the condemned, we are not just walking **with** them,
but walking **for** them.

We are visiting the past to protect the future.

We have to take the path the whole way.
We cannot rest nor cease in prayer for peace.
Genocide continues today: we think of Rwanda or Darfur.

To be a hope for the future, we must continually visit the past,
and confront the present.
Do not let us permit the images fade from our mind as we leave today.
Let them stir our souls to action.



Shoes from inmates at Auschwitz: © www.hmd.org.uk





Reflection: Pile of Old Shoes

Old shoes. Piles of old shoes.
Some are tiny: they belonged to children.
Some are huge: they belonged to tall young men.

Women's boots, children's plimsoles
The pile is so high you would need a ladder to reach the top.
Let us think where these shoes once walked:
to school, to Synagogue and to Church.

We Think of feet pounding the playground,
of leather soles on polished floors,
of squeaks and scuffs. Think of people.

We think of people in the middle of their lives,
of running children and busy housewives,
of men on their way to earn a living.

We remember that each pair of shoes is a person.
A person cruelly killed...
a person whose memory we must keep alive.

This is no "pile of old shoes" .

It is a reminder that real people perished in the Holocaust.
People just like us.
People made in God's image,
endowed with the beauty of an immortal soul,
destined in love to exist.

Who is anyone to cut short God-given lives like this?
Who are we if we let it happen again?

We are a **legacy of hope** for the future.
It is in our power to prevent such terrible things happening again.
Stand up.
Be counted.

Do it in love of the One who made us
and show forth the hope that is in us,
as followers of Christ.



[Glasses from inmates at Auschwitz-Birkenau](http://www.hmd.org.uk): © www.hmd.org.uk





Reflection: Glasses

Who knows the horror these eyes saw?
The eyes are the key to the soul
- what did these souls endure?

Stripped of clothing,
stripped of dignity,
stripped of sight
- stripped of life.

Each pair is a frame through which we must see the past:
we must see it through the eyes of the victims,
the ones who were torn away from their homes,
torn away from their families,
torn from this world.

They were deemed not to be people,
they were deemed to be even less than animals.

But they were people.

They once did the things that we all do:
they ate,
they drank,
they had families and friends,
lives of their own.

They went to parties,
told stories,
played
and loved.

By seeing through their eyes,
can we become the vision of the future?
Can we realise the humanity that is in each one of us?
The undying soul destined in love to exist,
and created in the image of God?

Let us look into the past,
let us not fear to be witnesses to the horrors that happened.
And in doing so, may we reach out in love to the world,
and may we become a Legacy of Hope.



Selection at Auschwitz: © www.hmd.org.uk





Reflection: Arrival At Auschwitz

This way and that.
“You -here!” and
“You, go over there!”

Who will live? Who will die?
Babies ripped from mother’s arms,
children taken to their own camps of death.
Families torn apart.
Lives shattered.

Who will live? Who will die?
Confusion reigns, chaos is king.
Nazi guards point this way and that.
Why do they participate? Why do they let this happen?
Why did they do it? Why did they take part?

What would I have done?
What *should* I have done?

What are the people in the crowd thinking?
The men in striped suits know well the fate that awaits the multitude.
Yet they are silent, unable to speak.

But this picture speaks.
It speaks in a thousands words.

Cold, black fences. Sad, worn faces.
Frightened babies, worried mothers,
angry guards.
Young boys, old men,
Jews and Gentiles,
though mainly Jews,
being cornered like cattle,
and driven to almost certain slaughter.



How scared they must have been. How fearful are we for the future? Do we see the emergence of Nazi idealism in society again? Can we stop it? What can we do? There was little hope for them then. For the people in this picture. But there is hope for us now. There is hope in us now. Through their suffering, their fate, we can learn something. And those who learn from the past, are less likely to repeat it.

Babies ripped from mother's arms,
did this not happen in Rwanda?
Children taken to their own camps of death,
does this not happen in Darfur,
where youngsters are stolen from their homes,
to train at hidden sites as child soldiers?

Families torn apart.
Lives shattered.
Who will live? Who will die?

What can I do?
What will I do?
Is there hope?
Is God their hope?

Then, am not I their hope?



Selection at Auschwitz: © www.hmd.org.uk





Reflection: Arrival at Auschwitz:
The Train Arrives, The Train Departs

The train arrives. The train departs.
This is the final destination.
Carted like cattle, herded like sheep.
A single line, but triple file.
The train which leaves departs in haste,
anxious to get away.

It shuffles people to, but never from.
Save maybe the lone driver,
his deadly duty done.

The day is clear, but the night,
like a night unending,
stretches out before us.

Which way will he send me?
To instant death?
To slow and painful torture?
To forced labour,
and starvation?

We cannot foresee,
though we have heard the rumours.

Are we human?
I can't quite tell.
They treat us worse than a dog.

Please be with me Lord
Stretch out your hand and deliver me!
By Your will may I survive.
I hope in You.
I trust in you.

Save me from the waters of the deep,
Lest the waves overwhelm me.
Do not let the deep engulf me
Nor death close its mouth on me.

O Lord remember all Israel!
O Lord, hear my prayer!
We are a people,
we are your people.
Let us not forget that.
Let no one forget that.

Lord answer, for your love is kind.
My oppressors are all before you.
Taunts have broken my heart.

For food they gave me poison;
In my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.
But I did not die,
God did answer.

I survived a living Hell,
Long days, cold nights,
Little food.
But I am old,
and my light now grows dim.

I await a peaceful sleep.

Will some one pass on the baton?
Will someone carry my torch?
Will they tell my story,
when I am gone?



Emaciated victims at Buchenwald: © United States Holocaust Memorial Museum,





Reflection: Emaciated Victims Emancipated

Am I here?
Have I made it?
Is this another day?

They are here, so I must be.

A Blanket.
A warm blanket.
But it is still so very cold.

But I am not hungry.

I stopped being that a long time ago.

Have I really made it?
Have we really survived?
The past seems like a dreadful phantasm.
I cannot bear to relive it.

Bells ringing for watery soup.
Shrill drills. Screams of terror.
Gun shots.
Silence.

Not the silence of peace,
not the peace of rest,
just eerie silence,
and smoke rising from the ovens.

No one dared speak.

But now, *now*, if I have freedom,
I must remember.
How else will others know the horrors of a camp?
The nightmare that was Hitler's dream?

The ones who did not survive would surely wish
that I had told people what I saw.
They would surely want people to know
about what happened to them...

But I am weak.
I can barely stand.

In the picture, I am young,
but now old age creeps in.
Brother, will you help me up?
Sister, will you give me a hand?

Will you take this picture for me?
Will you show it to your neighbours?
And to your children?
I am too tired to tell my story now.

Will you do it, for me?

© AC/CCJ/09/09



Starving Children in the Warsaw Ghetto: © www.hmd.org.uk





Reflection: Children of the Warsaw Ghetto

Mummy, I am cold.
Mummy, I am hungry.
Why is he taking a picture?

Do you think I want to be like this?!
Closer to me, baby brother.
Mummy can't hear us.

Let us put ourselves in these children's shoes. Let us sit with them, our backs against the wall.
How do we feel? Alone, abandoned? All around us are people - but they too are hungry and cold.
Is our smile genuine, or one of unease? Are we even the child smiling? Or are we the baby, confused and dazed?

The Warsaw ghetto was a place of lost hope, shredded lives. It was a place of death and decay.
But in that living nightmare was a shred of hope that some might make it. If they did, maybe they could stop it happening to others. Jars with tales of what went on were hidden by people living in this tiny section of Warsaw, they were recovered after the war. Were they hidden by the parents of these children? Did these children see what they saw?

Moreover, do we see what they saw? Do we see the horrors of the Nazi regime? Do we see our children in these children? Do we want better for them?



Images of Hope

Floha camp after liberation: © www.hmd.org.uk





Images of Hope **Reflection: Free at Last**

We have made it! We have made it!
Baruch HaShem, Praise God!
We have made it.

All around people cry with joy.
They hoped,
and their hope came true.

Words cannot describe the emotion,
the fear of the past,
the joy of the present.

A tear is wiped away
and an inmate can see clearly
that joy of liberation.

Men embrace tightly,
They test to see if this is a reality.
Other men look on,
arms around shoulders in solidarity
and support,
their hands touching in friendship.

You can almost hear their cries:
“We have made it!
We had hoped we would,
and we have made it!”



Tubercular child at Jewish Relief Hospital, Belsen: © www.hmd.org.uk





Reflection: Recovery

Let us look at the way the child is held. Over the side of the cot a Jewish Relief worker holds the toddler upright. The baby is on the way to recovery - but recovering from TB in the 1940s was a long process.

The world is still recovering from the Holocaust. We are still in that cot, that child. 65 years have passed since the end of the Second World War. Until this point, we too have been supported by other survivors, just as this baby is held by the lady from Jewish Relief. But now their arms are tired, and they must let go of us. 65 years is a long time. It is a time in which they have told us many stories. Stories we were at times scared to hear. Yet we have a duty to make sure that we repeat those things we have heard. As the number of Holocaust survivors grows fewer, we need to take up their tales of survival against all the odds, and make them our own. The hope that was in them to survive the Holocaust is now in us, and in us it becomes a hope that this terrible evil will never happen again. Sadly, there have been times since the Second World War when humanity has lapsed into the same sin of genocide: Iraq, Rwanda, Cambodia. We must pray for the future, that the recovery will be complete, that the world will be fully healed, and as part of our prayer, we need to make ourselves part of the victim's own *Legacy of Hope*, and make their stories our own. As their light grows dimmer, we must begin to shine.



British woman helps camp survivor try on shoes, Bergen-Belsen 1945: © United States Holocaust Memorial Museum





Reflection: Trying on Shoes

The joy of a new pair of shoes. These shoes are not newly bought from a high-street shop. They are not expensive, designer brand. They are simple shoes, a basic necessity that have become a luxury. The old ones, worn thin through camp labour have finally been thrown away. This act represents a new start, a fresh beginning. In the simple act of trying on shoes, we have an image of hope for the future.



Surviving children of the Auschwitz camp leave shortly after liberation, 1945: © United States Holocaust Memorial Museum





Reflection: Surviving Children

We are scared. Our heads are bent against a wintery wind. We have on warm clothes now, not striped pyjamas. Behind us we leave the barn that has been our home. We do not know what happened to our parents. We do not know if we will see them again.

But we are free, at least. So, what happens now?

In 2010, we must pose the same question. What will happen next? We know the story of the past, but what will happen in the future? Will we keep that image of the Holocaust alive in our minds, and prevent it happening again? Will we be part of the Legacy of Hope?



Yad V'Shem Hall of Names: © CCJ





Reflection: Yad V'Shem

The Hall of Names at Yad V'Shem. When you enter, you are stuck by the images in front of you. It is easy to forget that the victims of the Holocaust were individual people. Before the nightmare that was the Holocaust started, they had families, friends, went to school, came home from work in the evenings to hot meals. As you look up, your eyes flit from one face to another as the cone-shaped ceiling seems to stretch into eternity. And as you look down, there is a pool of water. Is it a symbol of life? Or is it there to represent the depths of Sheol, the underworld from which these souls now ascend to be with God? There is hope in God of redemption, of true liberation of the Spirit. What ever the evils we endure in this life, a just and merciful Father ensures that we will be recompensed in the next. This year, the theme for Holocaust Memorial Day is the Legacy of Hope. It is about taking the stories of those now too old to tell them and passing them on to the next generation. Did God really will the Holocaust? Or is it the case that what God allows to happen, and what He wills, are two very different things?

By being part of the *Legacy of Hope*, by looking at Hitler's inhumanity, we can discover the common humanity that we all share, and in it our understanding can be deepened of what it truly is to be made in God's image. In this world, we face pressures untold to conform to its own standards, when really we might better shape our actions to conform our lives to correspond more truly to the divine image in which we are made.



Oxford CCJ Holocaust candles: © CCJ





Reflection: Holocaust Memorial

A star of David. Six lit candles. Stones stretching out across the table, a Jewish memorial to the dead. Or should that be stones stretching out across a table, symbols of lives lost, in a trail that leads to light, the symbol of Divine Power? There are two ways of looking at the Holocaust. We can see it as a terrible event, focus on it, weep, sigh, shed tears. Or we can see it as a terrible event, focus on it, weep, sigh, shed tears, then raise our heads, dry our eyes - and the new day of hope begins to dawn. When we gather today, we gather to remember, but we also gather as a sign of the hope that is in us, a hope for a world free from the horrors of genocide, from the terrors that result from man's inhumanity to man. There are two ways of looking at this picture. We can look at the light, then at the stones, or we can look at the stones and then at the light.

Which will you choose?



Stained glass menorah: © CCJ





Reflection: Stained Glass Menorah

Seven candles, seven days of creation. Hope in a good God who made Heaven and Earth and who holds all things in being and who is our comfort even in the most terrible of times. The Holocaust was horrific, yet the trust of the Jewish people in a loving God, who would bring them through the torture, sustained them. Despite all, they trusted in Him. They hoped and in response God comforted them.

Do we dare to hope? Do we rely on God in our times of need? Our sufferings are probably nowhere near the torture they endured, but do we hope in God as they did? Or do we rely on our own resourcefulness, and become the answer to our own problems?



Sunrise over ocean: © CCJ





Sunrise Over the Waters

Stormy clouds and a choppy, dark sea. Yet, over the chaos, through the grey sky and foggy clouds that separate the heaven from earth, pierces through God's eternal light. The rays reflect His glory, rebounding off the waves so that what was dark and without form is lit up and its peaks, troughs and high points made clear.

How hard it must have been for those in the camps to make sense of what was happening. How they must have longed to know the reasons why. Yet the expressions we find in prayers hastily scribbled on camp walls, and poems drafted in the midst of the Holocaust on spare scraps of paper, express an incredible hope and trust - a hope in God's love, a trust in His justice.



Possible Order of Service - Ideas to Include

- Service opens with introduction to Holocaust Memorial day, linking the *Legacy of Hope* theme to the Christian message of hope in Christ. With the dwindling numbers of Holocaust survivors, and continuing acts of genocide in the world, it is necessary for Christians to stand up and speak out against hate crime, praying all the time for the coming of God's kingdom as Jesus taught. Hymn.
- Prayers confessing our failures to conform to the image of God in which we are made. Hymn.
- Readings from the Old or New Testament. Possibilities include Nehemiah 8 1-3; 5-6; 8-10, Revelation 12: 1-5a, these are recommended by the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, or alternatively you could use those readings proper to the liturgical calendar of your church: Nehemiah 8, Jeremiah 1:4-10 1 Corinthians 12 or 13, Luke 4:14-21 for Anglicans, or perhaps, for Catholics, the readings from the Mass for the Feast of St. Angela Merici 1 Peter 4:7b-11 and Mark 9:34b-37. You might also like to consider using a dramatised bible version of the readings if lots of children are to be present, as at a school assembly. Possible hymn.
- Homily/ sermon preaching the message of hope that is in Christ for us all, and God's desire for the salvation of the world. This should link both to the readings and to the theme of Holocaust Memorial Day: the Legacy of Hope.
- Tale from a Holocaust Survivor/Poetry readings with explanation - this is a good opportunity to involve children in the service.
- Bidding prayers/prayers of intercession, possible themes could be petitions offered on behalf of victims of genocide and war, prayers for the work of organisations like the Holocaust Memorial Trust, CCJ and Churches Together that they be guided by the Holy Spirit; prayers of hope for the future, prayers thanking God for His goodness to us and asking His help and guidance for the coming year, prayers for peace.
- Candle lighting: a large candle is lit in memory of those who perished in the Holocaust and to symbolise the light of Christ that we must be to the world in keeping that memory: we are all part of the legacy of hope that is in Jesus. You might also like to consider lighting smaller, hand-held candles from this one to be held by members of the congregation as a symbol of Christ's light of hope going out into the world.
- Conclusion and thanksgiving for time together.
- Hymn: to exit you might like to include some music, perhaps one expressing a desire to be conformed to Christ so that we can bear adequate testimony to the faith that is in us, for example "Make Me a Channel of Your Peace".



Further Ideas for Services

Possible Introductions for Services

1. Brothers and sisters, today marks the 65th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, just one of the many death camps created by the Nazis to destroy the Jews and to murder many other people for the colour of their skin, their creed or even their political beliefs. We gather together in Christ to share in the sorrow of those victims' suffering, and their joy at their liberation. Moreover, we come into this church to seek His peace, so that this atrocity will not happen again. Today we will pray not for liberation from a concentration camp, but from our own sinful ways, that, through God's grace, we will overcome the powers of darkness that led to the horrors of the Holocaust, the shame of the Shoah, and come to share in His kingdom. Every human being is a unique individual, created in God's own image – and today, we share in the hope of all Holocaust survivors, indeed, all those who are currently experiencing a reign of terror or who have seen the ravages of war, that the world will recognise the intrinsic worth in every living person. Let us pray....

2. An Alternative Start to a Holocaust Memorial Day Service

(N.B. Please be aware of possible psychological effects this technique could have on an audience before using.) Hello everyone. I would like to start by doing something a little bit unusual. First, I would like you to close your eyes. I want you to picture a scene. You are in a muddy yard. You can feel the mud clinging to your legs, caked in little brown patches above your broken boots. The cold winter air nips at your arms through stripped pyjamas, the material worn, with holes from the forced labour you have been doing for the past three years, ever since they boarded you onto that train with so many people you could not move an inch just to breathe fresh air. You are painfully thin, every bone creaks with the slightest movement, stiff through over-work and little food, but you are not hungry – all sense of what it means to be hungry has vanished in the passage of time.

The last day was the worst – the Germans had been rounding up more and more people, and the sound of gunfire and the smell of burning corpses still linger in the air. The camp is never silent. You think that this will never end. The beatings, the pain, the suffering.

At once the gates clang open. Dazed, you do not realise quite what it is happening. The hum of an allied plane draws your attention to the sky, while the cry of camp inmates, shrill shrieks and joyous cries come from left and right. The sound of foreign languages from the Allied soldiers comes as sweet music to your ears. They are here – they are here, they are finally here! In a dream-like state you head towards the crowds who gather to witness the liberation, your heart pounds like firing canons and you feel its racing beats inside your chest as you jog towards your friends. With as much energy you can muster, you join their shouts of joy. You have survived, and now there is hope!



This is the theme of this year's Holocaust Memorial day: the legacy of hope. For 65 years the people who lived through the horrors of the Holocaust, and who felt the joy of being liberated from Nazi dictatorship, have lived in the hope that this will never happen again. Sadly, it is still a just a hope. The horrors of Bosnia in the 1980s, the massacres in Rwanda in 1994, where 1,000,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were murdered, or even today in Darfur, where civil war rages, Black Africans are hounded by their Arab neighbours – the death toll is estimated at between 200,000 and 400,000 civilians. Worse still, the passage of time means that there are fewer and fewer survivors able to tell their tale. It is up to us to join their legacy of hope – and make that hope a reality. Welcome to Holocaust Memorial Day, 2010.



Ideas for Homilies and Sermons

Notes on readings from the Mass of St. Angela Merici - Catholics

In the first reading, we are warned to keep sane and sober for our prayers – when all about us are losing their heads, when all about us are following strange paths in drunken states of delusion, as Christians we are bound to keep the Law of Christ, to pray in situations of adversity, through words and actions, and in doing so, to glorify the God who made us. God's Law is a law of love, unfailing love against all the odds, a sober love, a love which ceases to do the right thing, even in the most difficult circumstances. Today is Holocaust Memorial Day. The war years in Nazi Germany and in Nazi occupied territory were years of drunkenness. The words of Hitler were like alcohol, intoxicating a whole society, stirring it to hatred, and in this stupor, 6 million Jews and thousands of other people from various other minority groups perished. Even some people who professed to be Catholic were caught up in this intoxicating state, hating those whom God called first through the patriarchs and prophets.

However, there were also Catholics who stood firm, and who, despite all the odds offered protection to those hiding or fleeing from Nazi persecution: Father Marie Benoit, for instance, used his connections to smuggle Jews into Spain and Switzerland, Stefania Podgorska, a Polish girl, 17 years old, sheltered 13 Jews in her apartment, and despite the threat of the SS, offered ungrudging hospitality to those in her care. She did so in prayer, seeking the help of Jesus and Mary and was guided by a female voice to stay put in that tiny flat, and to care for the Jews secretly. These examples of love and service show the hope that was in the Church during the Shoah. The hope for the future is in the Church today, just as it was then. Their voices and actions serve to remind us that we are to act in accordance with the strength God supplies, and to glorify Him even in the most difficult circumstances. This is the Church's very own legacy of Hope.

Gospel Mark 9:34b-37

Leading on from the first reading, it is important to realize that we are all servants – servants of God, and of each other. We are called in love to serve God through Man. The disciples are arguing amongst themselves as to who is the greatest. They are concerned with recognition, being thought highly of. They want to receive the glory themselves. Jesus tells us in this passage that this sort of pride is not the way to gain entry into Heaven. Instead, we must be humble, the last of all, the servant of all. Not only must we be servants of all, however, we are to welcome those whom society rejects, and in doing so, we welcome God Himself. Jesus takes a child and places them in the midst of the Disciples. Children were seen as the least in society, to the disciples, children were relatively unimportant – in Mark 10:13-16, they even try to stop the children coming to Jesus, thinking that they are too insignificant to come to the Lord. Indeed, it is only recently that children have come to be regarded so highly as they are today, only 150 years or so ago we were sending them down into mines even in our own country, and that older view of children as subordinate is what Jesus has in mind here. He takes a child, a humble child, and places him in the midst of the Disciples: "Whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me." He tells them.

Please turn over



Gospel homily suggestion continued.

Today is Holocaust Memorial Day. During the Holocaust, millions of children perished: gassed in chambers or forced to swallow cyanide. The little ones, whom God loves with every fibre of His being, who the Gospel tells us we should receive with love as if we were receiving Christ Himself, were murdered. If they did not fit the Nazi ideal, they were deemed less than worthless. With Jewish and disabled children, perished adult Jews and adults from a multitude of minority groups, also deemed little more than animals.

Yet, in the midst of the Second World War, there were people who took this Gospel to heart. Members of Caritas helped smuggle children out of Nazi Germany to safety in other places, nuns hid Jewish children in their schools, orphanages and convents, and lay people who concealed whole families in their cellars: these people became the servants of the least of society, and even risked their own lives to save the lives of people deemed worthy only of death by the Nazi government. These people recognized with Christ-like love that the least in the earthly kingdom of Hitler were the first in the sight of God, and they became their servants in recognition of the Gospel of Christ, making a powerful witness to their faith. These people witnessed to the hope for the future that is in Christ, and the legacy of their example, the legacy of love that they showed, is also a legacy of hope for the world that we in the Church must show forth today. Sadly, genocide did not stop with Hitler, race hatred did not stop when Auschwitz was liberated, even today in Zimbabwe people are beaten for the white colour of their skin, and in Darfur Black Africans are hunted by their Arab neighbours. We must ask ourselves, am I becoming a servant of all? Am I part of the legacy of hope that is in Christ, and in His Church?



Poems suitable for Holocaust Memorial Day, 2010

Taken from Hilda Schiff (ed.), Holocaust Poetry (London: Fount/Harper Collins, 1995)

I Believe

**I believe in the sun
though it is late in rising.**

**I believe in love,
though it is absent
I believe in God
though he is silent...**

(Translated from the French by Hilda Schiff. Text from an unsigned inscription found on the wall of a cave in Cologne where Jews had been hiding, p.184)

This poem, found on the wall of a cave in Cologne where Jews had been hiding, sums up the hope of many of those who endured the Shoah/Holocaust. They trusted in a God of love. They hoped in His love for His people, and in their love for Him. They hoped, even in the darkest hour, in Him. Let us join this legacy of hope. As we leave today, let us be a beacon of Christ's light shining forth as hope for the world, and let us hope in the one who saves us that one day we shall see Him, and the manifestation of His glorious kingdom on earth.



Race

**When I returned to my home town
believing that no one would care
who I was and what I thought
it was as if the people caught
an echo of me everywhere
they knew my story by my face
and I who am always alone
became a symbol of my race**

**Like every living Jew I have
in imagination seen
the gas-chamber the mass-grave
the unknown body which was mine
and found in every German face
behind the mask the mark of Cain
I will not make their thoughts my own
by hating people for their race**

Karen Gershon p. 161

The survivors of the Holocaust knew the hope that was in them. They knew that by their testimony, by silent witness, living their lives or by active witness telling their stories, they could make a difference. As time goes on, their numbers diminish. We are now in the 65th year since the war ended. That is a long time. Many of those who knew first-hand the atrocities in camps like Bergen-Belsen are no longer with us – but their stories are. By coming together today, we have made a commitment. We have committed ourselves to a legacy of hope. That same hope that was in the hearts of those in concentration camps as they prayed for liberation, that same hope that was in the hearts of the allied soldiers who fought Hitler, a hope for peace, a hope for justice and a hope for mankind is our own. As Christians, however, we hope for more than an earthly peace – we hope for the peace of heaven. By our witness to Christ and to His love for the world, may the legacy of hope live on, and may it come to fruition to the ends of the earth. Amen.



Riddle

**From Belsen a crate of gold teeth,
from Dachau a mountain of shoes,
from Auschwitz a skin lampshade,
Who killed the Jews?**

**Not I, cries the typist,
Not I, cries the engineer,
Not I cries Adolf Eichmann,
Not I, cries Albert Speer.**

**My friend Fritz Nova lost his father –
a petty official had to choose.
My friend Lou Abrahms was beaten and starved.
Some men signed their papers,
and some stood guard,**

**and some herded them in,
and some dropped the pellets,
and some spread the ashes,
and some hosed the walls,**

**and some planted the wheat,
and some poured the steel,
and some cleared the rails,
and some raised the cattle.**

**Some smelled the smoke,
Some just heard the news.
Were they Germans? Were they Nazis?
Were they human? Who killed the Jews?**

**The stars will remember the gold,
The sun will remember the shoes,
The moon will remember the skin.
But who killed the Jews?**

William Heyen pp. 174-5

The poem poses a crucial question for us: are we doing all we can to stop atrocities today? In Darfur, a civil war rages, where Arabs kill their Black African brothers, in Zimbabwe, terror against white farmers continues, despite the government's claims. Who killed the Jews? Who kills these people? As Christians, we are called to witness to our faith. We are called to speak out against injustice, and to preach love not hate. We are called to be like Christ, and to be a light to the world. The legacy of hope is in each one of us. It is in our faith, and in our witness to Christ, and as we leave today, let us promise that we will bear adequate testimony to the hope that is in us.



More Poems

B. Dagan, Imagination Blessed Be, Cursed, Be (Newark: Memoir Publications, 1997) with translations by Anna Sotto, they them selves are suitable for use as a conclusion.

The Last Night pp.30-31

The night shift, it's past 12 o'clock,
sorting out victims' clothes,
piles and piles of coats and shirts,
dresses and women's shoes.
Each item tells a tale,
the wearer is not alive,
his garment is all that remains,
he did not survive.

'Achtung' rings out, the Capos shout,
'burn each bag and case'.
Of what was done by brutal men
There must not be a trace.

Bratislava, Prague, Paris, Berlin,
and all the other places.
Addresses, names, burn them all,
Make sure they leave no traces.

Leave no witness, no one to tell,
that here were enacted scenes from hell.
From the high chimneys leap up the flames,
not bodies this time, but whatever remains.

'Faster, quicker!' – but not enough
They can't dispose of all the stuff.
'Stop burning now – get into line!'
We hear cannons – is this a sign?

Tanks are approaching, now coming near,
will we be saved from this life of fear?
Voices are heard, like songs of praise,
The Red Army's here – Messiah of our days.

They didn't succeed in burning their traces,
for even today, stacks of old cases
bear the names of those who were killed,
their silent 'j'accuse' cannot be stilled.

In museums we see behind walls of glass
these reminders of hell of many years passed.
'Remember the past!' the old cases call,
'Do not forget!' – a warning to all.



The ABC of Auschwitz p.68

Arbeit	A- is the work we do for no pay
Baracken	B- are the barracks – that’s where we stay
Capos	C – are the Capos – cruel and grim
Draht	D- the barbed wire that keeps us all in
Elite	E the elite who work in the store
Faulen	F- the lazy ones – three or four
Gong	G- is the gong that wakes us so early
Hauptscharfuhrer	H – is the guard, the German so surly
Idea	I – the idea to persecute Jews
Jew	J – are the Jews – the aim of these views
Klage	K - is the anguish deep in our hearts
Lager	L – are the camps that tear us apart
Mund	M – is the mouth – to open’s a sin
Nummer	N – is the number, tattooed on our skin
Ohrfeige	O - are the blows they give as they pass us
Panic	P – is panic – ‘Are they going to gas us?’
Qual	Q - is the torment we live in each day.
Rache	R – is revenge. ‘One day they will pay.’
Suppe	S -is the soup – a dream or a vision
Tor	T- is the gate that clangs shut, our prison
Unrecht	U – in injustice we know so well
Verbot	V – is the will to survive this hell
Wachturm	W – the watchtower that guards all the time
X and Y	For X and Y we don’t have a rhyme
Zukunft	Z – is the future which holds our hope
God gives us the strength to survive – to cope!	

This poem is based on one found written in German in Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1944 by two girls from Belgium.



Prayers of Intercession

Blessed be the Lord our God, King of the Universe who causes us to pray for the world of which we are a part; a world of pain and suffering, error and hate, prejudice and ignorance, arrogance and pride.

Lord God of compassion, hear us as we pray for those who suffer today for the horrors of the past. For survivors of the Holocaust whose memory of its awfulness still haunts and hurts.

We pray especially for.....

Compassionate God, *Hear Us*

Lord God of healing hear us as we pray for those who work for reconciliation and understanding peace, respect and tolerance. Guide organisations that foster friendship and heal hurts and bitter memories, that promote faithful encounter and honest dialogue.

We pray especially for

Healing God: *Hear Us*

Lord God of Truth, hear us as we pray for those who encourage interfaith dialogue and international peace and relations, for those who pioneer new ways of thinking and understanding, those who encourage fresh visions of a world where we respect each others diversity and celebrate the richness of each others traditions, where we learn from one another and glimpse something of the Mystery that is God.

We pray especially for

God of Truth: *Hear Us*

Lord God of Pity and comfort, hear us as we pray for those who are caught in the world's conflicts; innocent men, women and children. Hear their cries, feel their pain and loss, see their desolation.

We pray especially for

God of Pity: *Hear Us*

God of Mercy, hear us as we pray for those who are dying, with no-one to care for them, no-one to love them, those who die and nobody knows their name.

We pray you will send us to the lost and afraid, the destitute and the dying, the lonely and the oppressed. Give us grace, give us energy and give us a vision of your love and empower us to do your will.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen**



Catholic Prayer for the Fest of St. Angela Merici

Today is the feast of St. Angela Merici, who founded the first female teaching order, the Ursulines. Holocaust memorial day is about teaching and education, in the hope of preventing such atrocities from occurring again. We ask her to pray for us that, as we seek to educate people about the horrors of the Holocaust, God will give us grace and wisdom to proclaim the hope that is in Christ and His Church.



Prayers of Penitence

A Litany Of Confession

Lord we confess our day-to-day failure to be human

Lord we confess to you/Lord have mercy

Lord we confess that we often fail to love with all we have and are, often because we do not fully understand what loving means, often because we are afraid of risking ourselves

Lord we confess to you/Lord have mercy/Christ have mercy

Lord we cut ourselves off from each other

Lord we confess to you/Lord have mercy

Lord we confess that by silence and ill considered words

We have built up walls of prejudice

Lord we confess that by selfishness and lack of sympathy

We have stifled generosity and left little time for others

Holy Spirit, speak to us. Help us to listen to your word of forgiveness, for we are very deaf. Come fill this moment and free us from sin.

**Cathedral Church of St George,
Cape Town**

(From Desmond Tutu: An African Prayer Book 1995 H&S)

I lay my pain upon Your altar, loving God;
This is my lamb, my ram, my sacrifice,
My plea for pardon, plea for forgiveness
For all my sins of doing and not doing,
Prayers that blossom like flowers out of pain
Above the earth-pull.

My people's sins have flamed in sacrifice
Upon your altar through slow-moving time.

Pain for all evil, hatred, cruelty,
For the sick of body and the sick of heart,
For all the loneliness, the lovelessness of men and
women,

The unmeasurable loss of those that know not You-
The pain of the world, dear God, I place
Before Your shrine.

Look down in pity and forgiveness.
Cause Your countenance to shine upon us
And give us peace

Prayers for Holocaust Remembrance Day; Liberal Jewish Prayer Book: Siddur Lev Chadash



Jewish Prayers Suitable for Use in Worship and Combined Jewish/Christian Memorials

Prayers when visiting the graves of the departed

(Gaster, M., *The Book of Prayer and Order of Service According to the Custom of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews* (London, OUP, 1949)p. 208

Peace be with you, (my masters and teachers! Father! Mother! As the case may be) May your souls be bound up in the bond of life with the Lord our God! Peace be with you, and peacefully may ye rest upon your couches. Happy are ye who were able to walk in the path of our Creator, who have prepared yourselves for the life to come. Ye dwell in the exalted places of the pious ones, together with the angels above. May the Lord hasten your resurrection and cause us to be worthy of beholding your faces resplendent as the bright light of the firmament. May your merits and your perfect life assist us in our needs and protect us in times of trouble. Increase ye also your prayers and supplications like unto us, and join in our prayers to the Lord our God, that he through his infinite mercy and his abundant loving-kindness and for the sake of our holy fathers, and or the sake of the pious ones who have fulfilled his will, may have compassion, wives and our children, the remnant of our people; that he may have us from all sorrow and grief and hurt and anguish, and that he may not turn away from our prayers.

Prayer for the Victims of Nazi Persecution, Provided by the Chief Rabbi's Office

O God, Who art full of compassion. Who dwellest on high, grant perfect rest beneath the shelter of Thy divine presence, in the exalted places among the holy and pure who shine as the brightness of the firmament, to our brethren whose blood was spilt and who perished at the hands of the Nazi oppressors in the countries of their domination. We beseech Thee, Lord of Compassion, shelter them for evermore under the cover of Thy wings, and let their souls be bound up in the bond of eternal life. The Lord is their inheritance; may they rest in peace. And let us say, Amen.

Mourner's Kaddish

Sacks, J (Chief Rabbi), *Authorised Daily Prayer Book of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth*, (London: Collins, 2007) p. 37

The Kaddish (literally "sanctification") is the traditional prayer recited by mourners who have been bereaved. It is an acknowledgement that even when we are most sorely tried, we retain our faith and trust in the justice of the Almighty

Magnified and sanctified may His great name be, in the world He created by His will. May He establish His kingdom in your lifetime and in your days, and in the lifetime of all the House of Israel, swift and soon - and say: Amen.



Smith, S, *Forgotten Places*, (Newark: Quill, 2000) pp56-57

Memory is, whereas memorials give form to experience.

You can create an image, but whether it will ever be understood is another matter altogether. You can put up a monument, but the danger is that with the passage of time its significance might change. We have created monumental societies, in which at every site of historical significance we place an image or an obelisk, a plaque or a memorial. Then we ask what the mean; too few can tell us.

History is not about chronicling dates, times, facts and places. History is about how we interpret those events. To this end, the Holocaust is not over. Not only does its memory linger deep in the hearts of those who survived, but as we struggle to interpret events, its history is still being made.

There is no substitute for experience. The image of a lone survivor wandering in front of the memorial at Auschwitz-Birkenau demonstrates the contrast between experience and interpretation. The monument attempts to demonstrate that something significant happened here. It is a symbol of historical experience. The monument bears witness to the significance of events, it provokes, it cajoles and it represents the perspective of its creators. The presence of the survivor brings to that monument a dimension it can never have and never will. The survivor is the one who, as the exception, bears witness to that which the Nazis intended should never have been told.

He just is, and in so being, bears witness for those who cannot.

Questions for Reflection

1. Do these reflections affect how we view Holocaust memorials?
2. Is there a way in which memorials can be made to more fully express the sentiments of those who suffered?
3. How would I feel if I were to visit a concentration camp?
4. How, when all the survivors have gone, can we ensure their *memory* lives on, without their stories becoming a *memorial* only?