DEACON GEORGE'S HOMILY ON REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

On the 7th April,1982, HMS Repulse was due to sail and deploy on her three month patrol. HMS Resolution had just arrived in the submarine base, whilst HMS Revenge was currently out at sea, on patrol.

On the jetty, I saw Commander Moss, and my friend John David Law Caddy. John and I had joined up together, and now we were both Warrant Officers, I on HMS Repulse and John on HMS Resolution. Commander Moss beckoned me over to him. He was our appointer, and he told us that one of us would have to join HMS Coventry, a ship sailing to the Falklands. The surface fleet were short of men, therefore one of us had to join that ship. Commander Moss said he would toss a coin to see which one of us would leave our submarine and join HMS Coventry. John, said, "*let me go … I have never served on a ship, I have only served in submarines … but George has served on HMS Devonshire, a large destroyer … so let me go*." So Commander Moss agreed to John's plea and ordered him to go and join HMS Coventry. The next day he flew out to the Ascension Island and joined his ship. On the 25th May 1982, HMS Coventry was hit by an Exocet missile and sank. John David Law Caddy went down with his ship.

I believe that John died that I might **live** these eighty years. But John wasn't the first, he was the second one, who died that I might **live**. The first one died that I might **live**, **not just** for my eighty years but that I might **live** for **ever**. His name is Jesus of Nazareth.

It could easily have been **me** that joined HMS Coventry. But John said, "*let **me** go*." **How** can I repay him now he has gone? And then, there is Jesus. How can I repay **him**?

I **believe** the Scriptures and I **believe,** the words Jesus said. I believe that Jesus, and John Caddy, have risen from the dead and both are in heaven. So how can I repay them? I pondered. Then the answer came. "*in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me."* **So**, if I do this to my brothers and sisters, I will be repaying Christ and my friend John.

But then, in reality we can **never** repay what Christ has done for us, no matter how hard we try or how many people we lovingly help. We could do works of charity 12 hours a day and praise him the other 12 but it would still, not be enough. But Jesus has experienced, and knows our humanity, he knows our limits and he knows **us**. Therefore, he gave us the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit's gifts, so that we can **love** him, **praise** him, and **love** our brothers and sisters.

Just like John gave up his life, for his country. Jesus wants **us** to give up **our** life for his kingdom. To give up our life not by **dying** for **him** but by **living** for **him**. Living for him in our daily lives wherever we are at that moment. To give our **life**, to Him through our family, through our brothers and sisters, wherever they may be and through his Church.

However, sadly, there may be times when there is no other alternative other than dying for Jesus **or** for someone else.

My paternal grandfather, served in the WW1, and his ship was sunk, but he survived, but through his injuries, died few years afterwards. My maternal grandfather, served in WW2, and his ship was sunk as well, and similarly, he only survived for a few years afterwards. My Dad's ship fortunately didn't sink, but he lost all his family instead.

As he sailed backwards and forwards across the Atlantic, he witnessed ship after ship exploding, then sinking. He had to hope in something or someone. So, he said prayers each day, thanking God he was still alive, and if he had to go, Lord make it quick. His Chief Engineer said, **we** are lucky, being in the engine room of an oil tanker because, if we are hit, we won't feel a thing, it will be a very quick death.

But Jesus' death was slow and agonising, cruel and unwarranted, but he didn't shy away from it. He knew it had to be done so he did it. He went to the Cross for us.

Today, we remember all those who have died, in wars and conflicts, for their country. And rightly so, we should never forget them. And we should pray for peace.

But for the rest of the year, let us remember that Jesus died, for us, and for his kingdom. That we might **live** today **and** for ever. Amen.