



HOLOCAUST
MEMORIAL
DAY 27/1

Torn from Home
27 January 2019, 15.30

Refreshments will be served from 15.00.

Since 2001, the Government has invited British society to observe the 27th of January each year as Holocaust Memorial Day. 27 January is the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz by Soviet troops. Holocaust Memorial Day is intended to provide an opportunity for reflection on issues raised by all atrocities, especially those events officially designated as genocides.

The mass murder of millions of people of different ethnic, cultural, religious and political groups in more than one genocide provided the darkest side of twentieth century human history. While the remit of the day is wide-reaching, its focus remains the Holocaust. Although many others perished as a result of Nazi actions, Holocaust Memorial Day provides an opportunity to especially reflect on the fate of European Jewry, for whom Hitler and others held a particular hatred. Christians have also been among the perpetrators of genocide, as well as among the bystanders, and indeed the victims.

Holocaust Memorial Day can give us cause to remember the reality that evil is still powerful in our world. It can strengthen our resolve to protect every community from discrimination, intimidation and violence.

This year Holocaust Memorial Day is based around the theme of 'Torn from Home'. The theme encourages audiences to reflect on how the enforced loss of a safe place to call 'home' is part of the trauma faced by anyone experiencing persecution and genocide. 'Home' usually means a place of safety, comfort and security. Today we reflect on what happens when individuals, families and communities are driven out of, or wrenched from their homes, because of persecution or the threat of genocide, alongside the continuing difficulties survivors face as they try to find and build new homes when the genocide is over.

HMD 2019 will include marking the 25th anniversary of the Genocide in Rwanda, which began in April 1994 and the 40th anniversary of the end of the Genocide in Cambodia, which ended in 1979.

Welcome and Introduction

We stand.

The Right Reverend Tony Robinson, Bishop of Wakefield welcomes the congregation informally.

The Bishop continues

Opening prayers

These responses are based on the Jewish blessing on hearing bad news. Please join in with the text in bold print here and throughout the rest of this service.

We gather to remember what many of us have never experienced or seen. But we have heard that millions were torn from home, removed from all that was familiar, and relocated with an orchestrated cruelty that stretches the mind. We have seen the evidence. We have heard the witness. Today, we remember, and share the silence of remembering together. We who dwell in security cannot imagine the horror of being uprooted in uncertainty. We who enjoy comfort cannot comprehend the depths of pain. We who seek to know still struggle to understand how it came to be: that humanity could become so inhuman. Millions of Jews and others were torn from their home, uprooted. But they will not be torn from our memory. Today, they have a home in the silence of our shared remembering.

Silence.

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation.

**Through your goodness we have this time
to gather to learn the truth of ourselves.**

We cannot always feel joy for this life.

We know too much of lives that have been broken.

Give us courage when we hear tragedy, despair and death.

To bless you, the one true Judge. Amen.

We sit.

Torn from Home

Prose

‘The homes are empty and bare’
from *My Mother’s Sabbath Days* Chaim Grade

*Read by the Right Worshipful the Mayor of Wakefield,
Councillor Stuart Heptinstall.*

*Chaim Grade (1910-1982) was born and raised in Vilna, where he became a leading member of the Yung Vilné (Young Vilna) group of Yiddish poets and artists in the 1930s. Like many young Jewish men, who were thought to be at greatest risk from the Nazis, he fled the city when Germany invaded the USSR in the summer of 1941 and spent the war in Soviet central Asia. On his return after liberation, he discovered that his wife and mother had been murdered along with most of the city’s Jewish community, a loss powerfully evoked in his memoir *My Mother’s Sabbath Days*. This extract from *My Mother’s Sabbath Days* describes an encounter in the ruins of the city’s once thriving Jewish district with a survivor who had witnessed the march of a group of Jews to Ponary forest outside the city, where around 70,000 Jews were murdered between 1941 and 1943. It highlights both the trauma of the event and the ordeals faced by survivors who attempted to return to their former homes.*

“And how did Jews go?” I ask. “The Jews went quietly,” replies the stall-keeper. She speaks in a strange, otherworldly voice, as though the sun above our heads had drained her last drop of blood, and in the frozen desolation that surrounds us her voice sounds still more frozen, more desolate. Once she had gone out with a group to work outside the Ghetto and she had seen, among a group of Jews who were being taken to Ponary, an old man and an old woman. Each was carrying a pillow under one arm; they were holding hands like two children, and they were walking so quietly – never in her life had she seen such quietness. Her eyes had been dim with tears, but yet she had noticed that the pillowcases for the old couple’s pillows were carefully ironed, fresh and white, as though they had just been put on. “Why did the old people take along their pillows?” I ask. “Didn’t they know what Ponary was, or did they think they were being transferred to another ghetto?” And I feel that the sun high above is waiting with me for the stall-keeper’s answer.

She doesn't know, the woman says, why the old people took their pillows with them. It is possible they didn't know where they were being taken, but perhaps they did – at such moments, very strange thoughts can enter one's mind. Perhaps they had the notion that with the pillows they would lie more softly in their grave. She herself had several times been within a hair's-breadth of death and she knows that at such times wild, extraordinary ideas come into one's head... The stall-keeper falls silent, and her eyes rest once again on the sewer-grating: she marvels endlessly at the miracle of her survival down there. Then she turns to me and begins to tremble, like the net of spiderwebs over my mother's doorway. "In the Ghetto," she says, "people used to sing this rhyme: 'The homes are empty and bare/ But in the pits – all are there.'" And she walks slowly away down Jewish Street, until she disappears behind the piles of rubble.

Testimony

Rwanda Appolinaire Kageruka

We watch a video of Appolinaire Kageruka giving his account of the genocide in Rwanda.

Finding Refuge

Poem

Refugee Blues W H Auden

Read by Mary Creagh, MP for Wakefield

W H Auden (1907-1973) was one of the greatest English language poets of the twentieth century. 'Refugee Blues' was written in New York in March 1939 and addresses the fate of Jewish refugees from Germany, who found themselves forced from their homes but unable to find anyone to offer them a new one, highlighting the frequent indifference or hostility of the governments and citizens of the countries in which they sought refuge. Although 'Refugee Blues' is a rather lengthy poem, its rhythms – the poem was one of several written by Auden in the late 1930s which drew inspiration from blues music.

Say this city has ten million souls,
Some are living in mansions, some are living in holes:
Yet there's no place for us, my dear, yet there's no place for us.

Once we had a country and we thought it fair,
Look in the atlas and you'll find it there:
We cannot go there now, my dear, we cannot go there now.

In the village churchyard there grows an old yew,
Every spring it blossoms anew:
Old passports can't do that, my dear, old passports can't do that.

The consul banged the table and said,
'If you've got no passport you're officially dead':
But we are still alive, my dear, but we are still alive.

Went to a committee; they offered me a chair;
Asked me politely to return next year:
But where shall we go to-day, my dear, but where shall we go to-day?

Came to a public meeting; the speaker got up and said;
'If we let them in, they will steal our daily bread':
He was talking of you and me, my dear, he was talking of you and me.

Thought I heard the thunder rumbling in the sky;
It was Hitler over Europe, saying, 'They must die':
O we were in his mind, my dear, O we were in his mind.

Saw a poodle in a jacket fastened with a pin,
Saw a door opened and a cat let in:
But they weren't German Jews, my dear, but they weren't German Jews.

Went down the harbour and stood upon the quay,
Saw the fish swimming as if they were free:
Only ten feet away, my dear, only ten feet away.

Walked through a wood, saw the birds in the trees;
They had no politicians and sang at their ease:
They weren't the human race, my dear, they weren't the human race.

Dreamed I saw a building with a thousand floors,
A thousand windows and a thousand doors:
Not one of them was ours, my dear, not one of them was ours.

Stood on a great plain in the falling snow;
Ten thousand soldiers marched to and fro:
Looking for you and me, my dear, looking for you and me.

Music

Go Down, Moses *arr. M Tippett*

We listen to a short piece of music.

Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt land,
Tell old Pharaoh to let my people go.

When Israel was in Egypt land,
Oppressed so hard they could not stand,
“Thus spake the Lord” bold Moses said
“If not, I'll smite your first born dead”.

Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt land,
Tell old Pharaoh to let my people go.

Making others feel at home

Scripture Reading

Read by Councillor Maureen Cummings, Portfolio Holder for Communities and the Environment.

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured.

Prayers of Intercession

Led by representatives of Wakefield Interfaith Network and Amnesty International.

God of all, we bring to you our prayers for the world and its peoples.

Lord of forgiveness and mercy, as we have been reminded of the pain, suffering and loss of life cause to humanity by humanity itself, we pray for the sins which we ourselves have committed and for sins of omission, for the hurt we have caused you and our neighbours through ignorance or indifference, for failure to see your image in someone who is different, for putting our own welfare and social comfort above the basic needs of others and for our reluctance to get involved. We pray that you will mercifully grant us your forgiveness and that you will transform us to reflect your love and mercy to others.

A candle is lit.

Lord of all time, we are confronted by the staggering depth of history's legacy. Memories haunt us of lives broken and hopes destroyed. We pray that you will comfort those who are held back by their experiences, strengthen those who fear the future, guide the search for life when all else seems lost.

A candle is lit.

Lord of everywhere, we pray for people across our world who suffer today through poverty, hunger, disease, war, and genocide. We remember together today, those killed and affected by the Genocide of indigenous peoples, the Soviet genocide, the Nazi Holocaust and genocide, the genocides of the Cold War and Contemporary genocides of Rwanda, Bosnia, Srebrenica and Darfur. We pray for peace and reconciliation so that even in the most hopeless of situations, the cries of the suffering may be heard.

A candle is lit.

Lord of choice and action, we pray for the decision-makers of our world. Guide those who have authority to make change happen. We pray that the common good will empower individuals and transform divided communities.

A candle is lit.

Lord of memory and hope, we thank you for the testimonies of those who experienced history, who witnessed suffering and who champion the causes of freedom and justice today. We pray that their lives may be an inspiration to us so that we may never forget history and work to challenge injustice wherever it may be found.

A candle is lit.

Finally, Lord of every human experience, sometimes words are too little to describe the confusion of loss, the pain of suffering or the despair of the unknown.

So let us sit in silence now to offer the prayers of our hearts.

Silence is kept.

World Prayer for Peace

Led by Usman Ali.

We pray together

**Lead us
from death to life,
from falsehood to truth,
from despair to hope,
from fear to trust,
from hate to love,
from war to peace,
Let peace fill our hearts,
our world and our universe.
Amen.**

We stand.

Prayer for the Victims of the Nazi Holocaust

El Male Rachamim

Simon Phillips, Director of Interfaith for the Leeds Jewish Representative Council lights a final candle and leads us in prayer.

El Male Rachamim (God full of compassion) is a Jewish prayer for the departed that is recited at funeral services, on visiting the graves of relatives (especially during the holy month of Elul), and after having been called up to the reading of the Torah on the anniversary of the death of a close relative. The prayer originated in the Jewish communities of Western and Eastern Europe and since the end of the Holocaust, the prayer has been adapted as a memorial prayer for the victims of the Holocaust and Nazi persecution. This prayer is sung in Hebrew and translated below.

God full of compassion whose presence is over us all
Grant perfect shelter of Your presence to the six million souls
whom we mourn today, who have gone to their everlasting home
from Treblinka, Bergen-Belsen, Dachau and Aushwitz.
Master of mercy, cover them in the shelter of Your wings forever
And bind their souls into the gathering of life.
It is the Lord who is their heritage.
May they be at peace in their place of rest. Amen.

Silence is kept.

The Benediction

given by the Bishop of Wakefield.

As we go from this house of prayer
into a world of challenge and change
we remember the pain of the past.

As we obey God's commandments
we recognise life's need for love.

As we seek the truth and glimpse God in all people and in all places
we go to make the world a home for everyone.
Amen.

We sit.

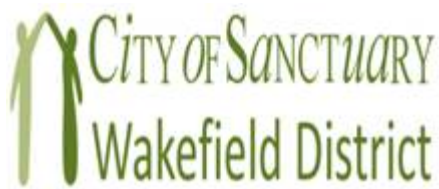
Poem

Colours *Michaela Rugwizangoga*

A video of Nina Sosanya reading the poem Colours, dedicated to all survivors of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda.

Red, Blue, Yellow,
Green, White, Purple,
Jasmin, Orange, Azure,
Old pallors
Make way for new homes
A future spread with colours
A horizon without sorrow
Here ends our pain.
Here begins life.

Thank you to all who have contributed to this event.



AMNESTY
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WAKEFIELD CATHEDRAL
in the Diocese of Leeds