

11 NOVEMBER

- 1 On this day in 1918, at 11.00am - the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month - the First World War came to an end. Much of the war had been fought in dug-out trenches across Belgium and France. It is thought that about 9 million soldiers lost their lives, and about 27 million were wounded - many of them permanently disabled.
- 2 At 11.00am, the fighting stopped everywhere, six hours after the Armistice was signed in a railway carriage in Compiègne, northern France.
- 3 Two years later the body of an unknown British soldier from one of the battlefields was laid in a coffin and brought over to England. On this day in 1920 the coffin of the unknown soldier was taken in procession to Westminster Abbey, past thousands of people lining the streets. During the service, the coffin was laid to rest with some soil from France in the floor of the central aisle of Westminster Abbey. The tomb commemorates all British casualties, especially those who have no known grave, and all who suffered during that war and since.
- 4 Lying there amongst the tombs of kings and queens and many famous people, this *"Tomb of the Unknown Warrior"* bears the inscription, *"Beneath this stone rests the body of a British warrior, unknown by name or rank, brought from France to be among the most illustrious of the land."*
- 5 During that service, the hymn *"Lead Kindly Light"* was sung, and we make that our prayer today:
 - 6 **Lead, kindly light,
amid th'encircling gloom:
lead thou me on.
The night is dark,**
 - and I am far from home,
lead thou me on.
Keep thou my feet;
I do not ask to see
the distant scene;
one step enough for me.
- 7 **I was not ever thus, nor prayed that thou
shouldst lead me on.
I loved to choose and see my path;
but now
lead thou me on.
I loved the garish day,
and, 'spite of fears,
pride ruled my will;
remember not past years.**
- 8 **So long thy power hath blest me,
sure it still
will lead me on
o'er moor and fen,
o'er crag and torrent, till
the night is gone,
and with the morn
those angel faces smile
which I have loved long since
and lost awhile.**
- 9 During the First World War, the soldiers in their dug-outs could see red poppies growing in the fields of Flanders - the name for an area that covers parts of Belgium, the Netherlands and France. Each year, the Royal British Legion sells artificial red poppies to raise money for injured soldiers, sailors and airmen who have served their country up to the present day.
- 10 Some countries mark Remembrance Day on the 11th of November itself, and others on the nearest Sunday. At 11.00am, many people remain silent for two minutes.

This is an excerpt from the page of this date in
'Praying Each Day of the Year',
a 3-volume book
by Nicholas Hutchinson, FSC.

For details:

<http://www.matthew-james.co.uk/>

Could make use of a search engine
to research this topic further.

This material is part of
the prayer and education website
of the De La Salle Brothers
in Great Britain:

www.prayingeachday.org