

Thought for VE Day - 8 May

'We'll meet again...'

I normally begin a Thought for the Day with a text from Scripture, but there's really only one quotation which can mark today, the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe, from the song made famous by Vera Lynn. It exemplifies the spirit in which our nation endured the conflict until we overcame.

It was a war which involved everyone in a way which had not happened before. This was because the advance in air power meant that whole populations could be subject to attack. I was a small boy growing up during those years of danger. One large bomb demolished a house just about a hundred yards down the road from our home, and at the same time brought the plaster from the kitchen ceiling down into my breakfast corn flakes. My brother and I agreed that the explosion must have been about at the seaside - a good eighty miles away!

Despite the danger and uncertainty, together with the sense of being in uncharted territory, my parents, and other grownups I knew, including the teachers at school, never for one moment communicated any fear or anxiety to us children. Judging by their convictions, I was perfectly certain that in due course the war would come to an end and peace would break out. We need those convictions today, faced with an unseen enemy. We need the encouragement which King George VI, our present Queen's father, gave to the nation at the first Christmas of the war:

I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year, 'Give me a light, that I may tread safely into the unknown. But he replied, 'Go out into the darkness, and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light, and safer than a known way'.

Yes, I'm sure we will one day be able to go out and meet up again, because our times are in God's hands and whatever the future holds it will ultimately be the way into His presence. So let His peace rule in our hearts.

John Tiller