



she loves

Devotional
November 10, 2009

THE POPPY AND THE CROSS, by Betty Loepky

In May 1915 Canadian Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae wrote, "In Flanders fields the poppies blow, between the crosses, row on row ...". The poppies in Flanders fields grow amongst the crosses marking graves of fallen soldiers. Thus the poppy has come to symbolize the ultimate price paid for peace and freedom. Canadians wear a poppy to pay respect to those who have laid down their lives for our peace and freedom. Such sacrifices are worthy of remembrance. We honour and remember the men and women who died and we acknowledge their gift of life and the blood they shed to secure our freedom.

But there is another who gave up his life, who shed his blood, to secure our freedom and to bring true peace to this world. He too, was sent on a mission to a foreign land, to liberate captives and declare the truth. He left his home to liberate us from an enemy more deadly and more powerful than any political regime or worldview. From the start the angels announced his arrival and purpose, "on earth peace to men on whom his favour rests" (Luke 2:14). He announced that he had come to set us free, "So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." (John 8:36). His Father "gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16).

But he died not only without honour, but even in dishonour, a death reserved only for criminals, death on a cross. We are reminded that Jesus Christ (completely human, completely God), stepped into history as a vulnerable baby, for the purpose and mission that God the Father had sent him. He offered up his life for our freedom, our forgiveness and our peace. It is truly appropriate to remember and honour those who have sacrificed their lives for the freedom and peace of others. Jesus demonstrated that without the shedding of blood no one can ever be truly free or forgiven (Heb 9:22). It is especially appropriate that we should acknowledge the One who has paid the price for our freedom with his own blood. Jesus Christ has liberated us from the deadliest enemy of all. "Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." (Eph 6:12).

But today millions upon millions still live in bondage of one kind or another, be it political, religious, legal or illegal. Indeed, freedom is very costly. Millions today suffer under the hands of oppressors. We have the opportunity to remember and show solidarity with those who suffer under persecution and oppressive regimes. We also show solidarity and appreciation for others who have suffered and sacrificed their lives for freedom. We should never forget those who have paid the ultimate price for freedom. We should never forget the greatest liberator of all, Jesus Christ. He alone defeated death. He gave up his life and now offers us new life. He assures us that everyone who "calls the name of the Lord" will be saved and find peace. (Rom 10:13). May his "Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord." (2 Peter 1:2).

Blessing, on behalf of the Northview Women's Commission,

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