



From South River to Afghanistan

October 27, 2014

I went to the Parish of the Resurrection in South River this afternoon for a time of meditation with Canon Gerald Westcott. He has been doing work in Christian spirituality and on Mondays offers a time for members of the clergy to come together in prayer. He led us in a meditation that directed us to reflect upon “light,” directing our thoughts to what light means for us as Christians and as a community of faith. I appreciated his guiding us toward John’s Gospel and a verse (1:5) that tells us about God in Christ: “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

I reflected upon Gerald’s words all the way back to St. John’s where I visited the Afghanistan Memorial Vigil at Confederation Building.

There, I discovered the likenesses of 158 Canadian Armed Forces personnel, three Canadian civilians and more than 40 American service members under Canadian command etched onto granite. It was a moving tribute to their lives and their sacrifice. I was grateful for the personal tour by Major Shawn Samson, a member of our diocese and a military chaplain. He recounted for me some of their stories as we looked at the images of the fallen before us. Some soldiers were at Confederation Building on duty and I made it a point to speak with them and thank them for their service before I left. It has been a difficult few days for those who wear the uniform of Canada and I wanted those soldiers to know how grateful Canadians really are for their service.

This past week Canadians experienced only too vividly the power of darkness as two members of our military were murdered on Canadian soil. In the face of such inexplicable evil it can be tempting to believe that our world is descending into darkness. But even in the face of last week’s madness there were acts of courage and heroism as we remember those who risked their own lives to try and save the fallen and to stop the killers. Even in darkness, there was light.

I thank God today for all who serve this country in uniform: military, police, firefighters and others. I thank God for their willingness to place themselves at risk to protect the rest of us. I thank God for their light in the midst of darkness.

We serve a God who has promised us that love will ultimately be more powerful than hatred, light more powerful than darkness.

I’ve known that for a long time.

It was good to be reminded of it again today.

Blessings,
+Geoff