



DAYS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

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10 Publishing
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They are unforgettable days

During the First World War the then Prince of Wales was invited to a special hospital on the outskirts of London. Three dozen of the most wounded men from the front were being cared for. He agreed to pay a visit.

On arrival, he was shown over the principal ward. He shook hands with some, spoke kind words to many and sympathised with them all.

‘I thought there were thirty-six,’ the Prince of Wales said, looking around as his visit drew to an end. ‘I have only seen thirty.’

It was explained that six of the very worst cases were in a special side ward not usually visited.

‘I must see them,’ he said.

Guided by the doctor into the side ward, he saw the men, bruised, maimed, helpless wrecks.

But there were only five.

‘Where is the other?’

It was again explained that one poor man was so badly injured that he was kept in a room alone and it would be wiser not to see him.

‘I must see him too,’ he said.

Taken into the room he saw a sight which stunned him. There lay all that was left of a brave soldier. He was blind, deaf, legless, armless and disfigured almost beyond recognition as a human being. Standing silent a moment, moved beyond measure, the Prince of Wales stooped down to kiss the brow of the veteran, and with trembling voice he exclaimed, ‘Broken for me!’

Throughout history, there are many stories of people who have given their lives on behalf of others. Every remembrance of heroism and sacrifice deeply touches us. ‘Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends’ are the immortal words of Jesus.

Hope for ever

There are days which are indelibly written on our memories. Those who were alive know exactly where they were when they first heard about 9-11. But with the passage of time, even

that will fade into a blur and will be known only by students of history.

And yet, the days we remember at Easter are still known the world over as we recall the greatest sacrifice and drama in all of history. The most significant event in history was not the creation of all things, nor even the moment when the Creator came into our world and was born in Bethlehem. The most significant event of all time can be dated to the first Easter when Jesus suffered and died, was buried and then rose again from the dead, leaving behind an empty grave and a changed world.

Easter does not have the razzamatazz of Christmas, but it completes what Jesus started when He was born into the world thirty-three years before. We can't have one without the other. In fact, not only did Jesus repeatedly foretell that He would suffer and die on a cross, He said that His death was the fulfilment of all that the prophets that came before Him had spoken about down the centuries.

Easter eggs and bunnies may put a smile on our faces, as well as inches on our waistline, but they betray the huge significance of Easter. Jesus' death was the ultimate sacrifice. His

resurrection was the ultimate victory. A way was opened up for men and women to enter into a relationship with God which would last for ever. This is what Easter is all about. Easter is the only hope which doesn't evaporate like a vapour with the passing of time.