

Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.

In the name etc

80 years ago this week, as news of D Day broke, King George VI addressed his people, setting the new stage of the Second World War in explicitly religious terms. In his broadcast he said: We shall ask not that God may do our will, but that we may be enabled to do the will of God.

It might not be popular in today's age of historical nuance to view the conflict of the Second World War as a clear cut battle between evil and good, as a religious conflict. That is in part because we now often shrink from naming things as explicitly one or the other.

However it is clear that those who were involved in the D Day landings did believe, as George VI articulated, that they were involved in a battle that involved good and evil. A battle that therefore invoked the will of a God who seeks the good for us.

Anyone who has been to Auschwitz or Thereisenstadt or Bergen Belsen will know that it is impossible to see such things and not think of the concept of evil. Indeed such is the scale of such evil that it almost seems supernatural. Yet what is perhaps the most difficult lesson of all is that such evil was in fact entirely rooted in human nature.

If anything that makes it even more important that we view such a conflict in the Christian terms of good and evil: because in such a system we are able to name the fact that it is fallen, wicked humanity who commits such evil and at the same time say there is hope for the casting out of such evil in humanity as well.

It is a sheer coincidence that today we have set as our reading from the Gospel and incident where Jesus deals with the consequences of driving out evil.

We are called to do the will of God, to, in the words of George VI, pray that we might be enabled to do the will of God. And to quote Jesus's own words it is by doing this that we become brothers and sisters with Christ himself.

Sometimes that will involve doing difficult things, dangerous things, things we might not actually want to do- as Christ makes clear 'No one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his property without first tying up the strong man'. That isn't always easy, as those 80 years ago knew all too well.

Yet it is the calling that is placed upon us in this generation. And is placed upon us by none other than God himself. To do good, to resist evil, to therefore do the will of God, and therefore become ever closer to the Christ, the one who is very goodness itself.

In the name etc.