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Export date: Fri Oct 30 4:06:35 2026 / +0000 GMT

Christian Perspectives: Living the Golden Rule in challenging times

By Janet Sinclair

All Christians everywhere, all people of any faith who subscribe to values of justice, equality, compassion and kindness for all people, but especially for the more vulnerable among us, have reason in these times to protest the direction our world is taking.

We deplore bullies and bullying tactics in our schools and workplaces, yet millions of Americans voted last week to make a bully their president.

He has been given power to shape our world.

We all know that destructive leadership for even a brief period can affect, not just a few years, but rather generations that follow.

Brexit, the U.S. election, polarization around race, gender, and immigration as divisive issues in coming European elections all indicate a climate of fear that has become focused on ?the other? ? the neighbour who is ?not like us.?

As we stood at the Cenotaph last Friday, watched the laying of the wreathes, and observed two minutes of silent remembrance, my first thought was that in this country we have so far been spared the savage destruction of war here. We have not seen our own cities, our schools and churches, hospitals and homes bombed to rubble. Yet, we pause and remember that most of the world has had, or is living through, that kind of devastation.

My father was a veteran.

He spent a lifetime trying to suppress and forget what he had experienced in four years of war in North Africa, Sicily, Italy, and Holland. He refused to talk about the war until the final years of his life.

I realize now that I was raised in an atmosphere steeped in awareness that the world could turn violent and unpredictable We got that from our parents who came of age at the beginning of the Second World War and our grandparents who were young adults during the First World War.

In his final years, my father revealed a little of what it was like to ?see things that one should never see and do things that one should never do.?

I began to understand more clearly his commitment to a life of service to others and living the Golden Rule.

My parents were married after a four year courtship just three weeks before Dad went overseas. They were 21. He went to war and our mother waited. Letters and pictures that crossed the Atlantic became icons, symbols of hope. They carried a vision and a hope for the marriage that would be begun when he returned, the family they would have, the home they would build. These symbols and visions and hopes helped them to endure.

Jesus said,? Stand firm, and you will win life.? (Luke 21:19) That's what they did. Their vision of a more humane future sustained them through hardship. Their response shaped their souls and continues to shape their descendants' values.

Big choices in a democracy are made on days like November 8.

Each one of us also chooses how we will respond to what happens around us in every moment of every day.

We choose well when we orient ourselves to the values taught by our faith.

We are meant to love the One who creates and we are meant to love and care for one another.

What does God require of us but ?to seek justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God??

If this is our vision, we are equipped to move through the fear and disillusionment to help co-create a more humane world in which we value our frail, beautiful environment and every creature that depends upon its hospitality.