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**Monday 30th March: A Vicar’s Reflections…**

I wonder how you got on yesterday, without a church service to attend physically? Here at Colburn Vicarage, we tried various different You Tube posts, both for a church service or an inspirational talk of sorts, and then three of us simply got together and prayed. Later on, we also watched Songs of Praise (something we would rarely do, to be honest - partly because we’re never home in time from church to view it!). Inevitably, given the present restrictions, the singing elements were taken from the BBC archive; but it was still reasonably uplifting to sing along.. I did, however, find the two following clips from +Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of Yok-elect, very helpful in the present moment, reflecting on the way that people’s experience of church is currently *changing*, rather than coming to an end.

This could, of course, have a long-term impact on the ways in which we live out our Christian lives, once the present crisis is over. I guess we may end up with a hybrid of some sort; but the emphasis on looking out beyond ourselves to those in need around us is surely something which we would wish to embrace. Indeed, it’s something which we have tried to live out in our present church experience, anyway. I thought you might appreciate these two little clips of the soon-to-be-Archbishop of York speaking to Aled Jones. If you’d like to see the whole thing, the final link should take you there:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p087w7kx>  and his final thoughts: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p087w86j> - both taken from Songs of Praise yesterday with Aled Jones: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m000gxq8/songs-of-praise-aled-jones-and-songs-of-praise>

I found +Nick Baines’ latest blog post extremely helpful. One of his quotations from Terry Eagleton’s book, ‘*Hope, not Optimism’*, (p12), I found particularly salutary: ‘*Optimism does not take despair seriously enough’.* I guess I may not be the only one struggling with an almost jingoistic tone in the present government rhetoric, when, increasingly, families and friends are grieving the loss of loved ones, and often prevented from attending funerals, because of new restrictions. I have two further graveside funerals tomorrow and Wednesday at Hipswell Cemetery. I would value your prayers both for myself and for the families and friends of the deceased.

There are never meant to be easy answers in the face of life’s horrors. We are called by a God who, rather than belittling the pain of suffering and loss - or merely viewing it from a safe distance, chooses to enter the hurt with us, and suffers with and for us. He then invites us to take his yoke upon us, and to learn from him (Mt 11:29). As +Nick writes: ‘*The Christian Church will be found to be authentic when it reflects the Jesus who, accompanied by fallible and fickle friends, is able to leave behind past securities and walk alone to a place of suffering, injustice and death’.* In similar vein to +Stephen above, +Nick continues, *‘..I am so proud of clergy and lay people who are grasping the opportunity thrust upon them to re-imagine what faithful discipleship and service might look like now and into a changed future.’*

As we each come to pray during these days of uncertainty - overwhelming for many - let’s ask God what it is that He’s calling us to, here, individually and corporately. And then listen long, and hard, enough actually to wait for His answer. And may God bless us *all* in that tough, yet vital, work of prayer..

Take good care,

Andrew

**Revd Andrew Cromarty, Vicar, Hipswell Parish**

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| nickbaines posted: "So, Bob Dylan has released his latest epic. 17 minutes of references to the last sixty years of politics and music. Brilliant stuff. Called ‘Murder Most Foul’, it builds from the assassination of President John F. Kennedy on 22 November 1963. It also o"   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | Respond to this post by replying above this line |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | New post on **Nick Baines's Blog** | http://s0.wp.com/i/emails/blavatar.png |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | [**A passion for hope**](https://public-api.wordpress.com/bar/?stat=groovemails-events&bin=wpcom_email_click&redirect_to=https%3A%2F%2Fnickbaines.wordpress.com%2F2020%2F03%2F29%2Fa-passion-for-hope%2F&sr=1&signature=f5e1dc5b63d2d8a99aaed94ead3f780e&user=99fc5c4f893967f62419db8a70f9d721&_e=&_z=z)  by [nickbaines](https://public-api.wordpress.com/bar/?stat=groovemails-events&bin=wpcom_email_click&redirect_to=https%3A%2F%2Fnickbaines.wordpress.com%2Fauthor%2Fnickbaines%2F&sr=1&signature=75d589b6df52dac223e08e94c0de896b&user=99fc5c4f893967f62419db8a70f9d721&_e=&_z=z) |   So, Bob Dylan has released his latest epic. 17 minutes of references to the last sixty years of politics and music. Brilliant stuff. Called ‘Murder Most Foul’, it builds from the assassination of President John F. Kennedy on 22 November 1963.  It also offers a bit of perspective. When we speak of “the end of the world” we usually think in terms of an ultimate event - the final cataclysm in which the place of humanity in the cosmos shuts down. But, history is a litany of endings of many worlds. I was only six when JFK was shot in Dallas, but I remember very clearly the impact the news had on my parents and grandparents. We were sent to bed early; the world as we knew it was shot.  Yet, life carried on for the world, despite the ending of a world.  Today is called Passion Sunday in the Christian calendar. If it was ever experienced by Christians as just another episode along the way to the cross, this year might well be different. For all of us, a way of life has been interrupted; for the church, the rituals - and locations - of commemoration and celebration have been dislocated, literally. But, the experience of dislocation returns us to the reality of the original story.  [https://nickbaines.files.wordpress.com/2020/03/bc3e929a-1216-499d-9001-cd154cd2e4d4.jpeg?w=113](https://public-api.wordpress.com/bar/?stat=groovemails-events&bin=wpcom_email_click&redirect_to=https%3A%2F%2Fnickbaines.wordpress.com%2F2020%2F03%2F29%2Fa-passion-for-hope%2Fbc3e929a-1216-499d-9001-cd154cd2e4d4%2F&sr=1&signature=5f73b0844aefde190e08cfdd697d3f71&user=99fc5c4f893967f62419db8a70f9d721&_e=&_z=z)  Jesus approaches Jerusalem, knowing that he won’t be leaving it alive. He is accompanied by his optimistic friends who haven’t quite read the runes and assume it will all end well. Despite the realism of Jesus and his straight talking, his friends just can’t think differently (which perhaps illustrates why politicians can be so slow in facing the devastating implications of pandemic threats). But, when reality hits and hope lies bleeding into the dirt of Calvary, the ended world has to be faced. No escape, no illusions, no romantic resolution.  This is why Terry Eagleton, in his book ‘Hope Not Optimism’ (p.12) can write: *Optimism does not take despair seriously enough.*  There are some voices worrying aloud about the demise of the church because of our having to close buildings for a few weeks or months. People will lost the habit of going to church, apparently. Well, what will that tell us? But, it isn’t the only option and it isn’t necessarily the biggest challenge to the real power of Christian faith.  As we rehearse again today, Passion Sunday, no one is exempted from the power of human mortality - from anything the world can throw at us. That is why Christian faith is rooted in a God who opts into the world, not out of it. But, fully immersed in that world, we needn’t be bound by it. The Christian Church will be found to be authentic when it reflects the Jesus who, accompanied by fallible and fickle friends, is able to leave behind past securities and walk alone to a place of suffering, injustice and death.  Nothing glib here. Which is why I am so proud of clergy and lay people who are grasping the opportunity thrust upon them to re-imagine what faithful discipleship and service might look like now and into a changed future.  Eagleton also wrote (p.3):  *Authentic hope ... needs to be underpinned by reason ... Hope must be fallible, as temperamental cheerfulness is not.*  We listen to experts. We take advice. We recognise the possibility of getting it wrong. But, grounded in hope and love (of God and neighbour), we find ourselves grasped by authentic hope. Because, as Eagleton puts it (p.78):  *If God knows the world, then he must know it as it is, in its freedom, autonomy and contingency.*  [**nickbaines**](https://public-api.wordpress.com/bar/?stat=groovemails-events&bin=wpcom_email_click&redirect_to=https%3A%2F%2Fnickbaines.wordpress.com%2Fauthor%2Fnickbaines%2F&sr=1&signature=75d589b6df52dac223e08e94c0de896b&user=99fc5c4f893967f62419db8a70f9d721&_e=&_z=z) | March 29, 2020 at 2:07 pm | Categories: [Coronavirus](https://public-api.wordpress.com/bar/?stat=groovemails-events&bin=wpcom_email_click&redirect_to=https%3A%2F%2Fnickbaines.wordpress.com%2Fcategory%2Fcoronavirus%2F&sr=1&signature=3832dbc31f174985c4b5c160f9b0f87a&user=99fc5c4f893967f62419db8a70f9d721&_e=&_z=z) | URL: <https://wp.me/pnmhG-1ul>   |  |  | | --- | --- | | [Comment](https://public-api.wordpress.com/bar/?stat=groovemails-events&bin=wpcom_email_click&redirect_to=https%3A%2F%2Fnickbaines.wordpress.com%2F2020%2F03%2F29%2Fa-passion-for-hope%2F%23respond&sr=1&signature=eee5c9b752463e97217650081a8e6c70&user=99fc5c4f893967f62419db8a70f9d721&_e=&_z=z) | [See all comments](https://public-api.wordpress.com/bar/?stat=groovemails-events&bin=wpcom_email_click&redirect_to=https%3A%2F%2Fnickbaines.wordpress.com%2F2020%2F03%2F29%2Fa-passion-for-hope%2F%23comments&sr=1&signature=694809f9918dce565a1390fea7eb670f&user=99fc5c4f893967f62419db8a70f9d721&_e=&_z=z) | | |  |  | | --- | | [Unsubscribe](https://public-api.wordpress.com/bar/?stat=groovemails-events&bin=wpcom_email_click&redirect_to=https%3A%2F%2Fsubscribe.wordpress.com%2F%3Fkey%3D20e17caca9ca134de96a077d54df632b%26email%3Dandrew.cromarty63%2540btinternet.com%26b%3DUvzg9zqrF6SG03OLJlYKDGiJMt_UnNSlPWZqTvbEuvBpqpIke9d5IkH235GFH1v3PiXZhrZyqys9Esj_orAkQEPqWiV_Pk6ybH6-8dITPQW0-Q%253D%253D&sr=1&signature=3f8309c29469a236dbb94a9f54453119&user=99fc5c4f893967f62419db8a70f9d721&_e=&_z=z) to no longer receive posts from Nick Baines's Blog. Change your email settings at [Manage Subscriptions](https://public-api.wordpress.com/bar/?stat=groovemails-events&bin=wpcom_email_click&redirect_to=https%3A%2F%2Fsubscribe.wordpress.com%2F%3Fkey%3D20e17caca9ca134de96a077d54df632b%26email%3Dandrew.cromarty63%2540btinternet.com&sr=1&signature=43d9c921d3883a4cf77ba2123dc1585b&user=99fc5c4f893967f62419db8a70f9d721&_e=&_z=z).  **Trouble clicking?** Copy and paste this URL into your browser:  [https://nickbaines.wordpress.com/2020/03/29/a-passion-for-hope/](https://public-api.wordpress.com/bar/?stat=groovemails-events&bin=wpcom_email_click&redirect_to=https%3A%2F%2Fnickbaines.wordpress.com%2F2020%2F03%2F29%2Fa-passion-for-hope%2F&sr=1&signature=f5e1dc5b63d2d8a99aaed94ead3f780e&user=99fc5c4f893967f62419db8a70f9d721&_e=&_z=z) | |  |  | | --- | |  | |  |  | | --- | | [Thanks for flying with https://s0.wp.com/i/emails/blavatar-default.pngWordPress.com](https://public-api.wordpress.com/bar/?stat=groovemails-events&bin=wpcom_email_click&redirect_to=https%3A%2F%2Fwordpress.com&sr=1&signature=7e34f99b8a8f60a2979293df01c62e5d&user=99fc5c4f893967f62419db8a70f9d721&_e=&_z=z) | |