



Thoughts Poems and Reflections in a Time of Pandemic.

2. Is there Anyone There?

Thoughts, Poems and Reflections in a Time of Pandemic. Number 2: Is There Anyone There?

At the present time the news is dominated by two things, the rapidly increasing number of deaths from the Corona Virus Pandemic and the disruption it creates. The social isolation forces us in on ourselves and makes us face up to our personal thoughts, fears, and challenges that we might otherwise have hidden away. In these *“Thoughts, Poems and Reflections in a time of Pandemic”*. I describe some of these, and how through facing them we may find fulfilment in the lives we seek.

In the first of these reflections, using the poem on the *“Music Trees”*, I considered the cycle of life and death. Every death is a heartache for some family, and the pain and grief of that parting must be fully expressed. However, the end is another beginning in the cycle of life.

In this second poem I consider another challenge that the pandemic can bring..... and that concerns the images for others that each of us tries to create. This poem is about a housewife trapped into domesticity by her children. Because of the current experiences of lock down, with children being kept at home with their parents, unable to go out and see and play with their friends, these feelings of entrapment must potentially be very much greater. Although my poem was again written long before the present pandemic, it expresses some of the stresses which I believe people must now be feeling. This poem is not about trying to keep an impossibly tidy house..... it is about being trapped by the need to present an image which is impossible to sustain.

IS THERE ANYONE THERE?

"Is there anyone there?" Called the vicar
As he knocked on the red painted door
As the toys in their chaos lay in silence
On a prided but untidy floor
But never his knock was answered
And never a voice was heard
As the children were bade to keep silence
As the rest of the house was prepared.

"I am coming just now", called the housewife
With the countdown to entry begun
As she checks to affirm that her welcome
Sets standards her lifestyle has run
For the image she always must offer
Is the best her behaviour can do
In her drive to support an impression
Of control that she seeks to pursue.

But each time her convictions are threatened
The door is then bolted and locked
By acts that themselves bear the witness
To the feelings that intellect blocked
For the depths of her mind holds a prison
Of feelings she cannot explore
Which the selfhood of care and profession
At one time gave power to ignore.

Then the knocking her mind never answers
Destroys the control she's applied
For the torment of children's insistence
Breaks open the feelings inside
And the care and commitment to others
That shines from the depth of her heart
Is tinged with the need for assurance
And worries that fear will impart.

"Who really was there?" Thought the vicar
As he turned from the red painted door
While the housewife took off in the silence
The mask which unworthiness wore
To transfer the concern she is offered
To the image her willpower's prepared
As the toys keep their counsel in silence
On the anguish that nobody's heard.

After "The Traveller" by Walter De-la-Mare

September 1998

REFLECTION

Sometimes what might appear to be the most obvious things may seem trite, and do not help. In the Bible in Luke Chapter 12 verse 22 onwards Jesus said to his disciples, *“Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them. Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you”.*

In this passage, Jesus is rightly describing how we are all valued in this Kingdom of God. but in the rest of the chapter, he is describing the challenges that must be faced for those who seek this kingdom it and the commitment it requires. Simply reciting these verses to someone who feels trapped by the situation they are in and can see no way of escape, whether they be the housewife, carers for the elderly, handicapped or infirm, or those in lockdown, does not help. The vicar in his visit was unable to help.

Help can never be enforced, instead it must always be made available in love and care for people to accept it when they are ready. Above all we must accept that this need to reject is very real for the person concerned, we must honour and respect these needs, and never force our views and opinions on anyone. When we do offer help to anyone, we may find it is rejected. That does not mean we should stop offering help, companionship, and support, even if such rejection has taken place. Instead, it means listening to people, finding out what their real needs are, offering what is correct for them at the time, and acting with love, care, and respect.

We must find ways forward, not by acting from outside as helpers or supporters, but as companions on our common journeys, so that we all can together discover the love which is described in the Bible and find ways to uncover the self-worth and self-acceptance which is promised by Jesus in Luke Chapter 12. That is not just in the life of the housewife, but in all of our lives.

We ask or pray according to our own beliefs for all people who feel trapped or imprisoned in mind, body, and spirit. We remember those people whose sense of worthiness and self-worth has been destroyed or diminished by the situation they are in, including abusive coercion and by the actions of others. We ask or pray for all people who feel such emptiness inside. At this time, we particularly remember and pray for all people trapped in homes or in other situations where the threats or the realities of physical abuse and emotional abuse are very real. We ask or pray for all people trapped in households where, particularly at this time of lock down, escape may seem ever more like an impossibility. We ask or pray that they may be granted the courage, strength, calmness, and stamina to find their true self-worth, which is described by Jesus in the Gospel message, and to discover new hope in the light of life.

ps. Did the vicar manage to get through the door?

The complete collection of reflections is available is available at: www.com.tgdr.co.uk/articles/001C-PandemicThoughts.pdf