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Fear - Faith - Fortitude

In June I returned to 'normal duties' following my sabbatical, which I wrote about in my last letter for Look-In way back in February. Due to family health problems things didn't go entirely to plan (do they ever), but having the sabbatical when I did meant I was able to offer a lot more support to my parents and Sue's parents than I would have been able to do under normal circumstances.

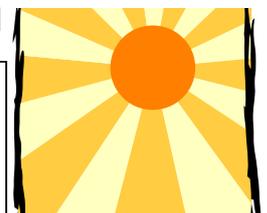
Anyway, now life has returned to normal. Except it hasn't. The last few weeks have shown a side of life that is far from normal. Terrorist attacks on Westminster Bridge, London Bridge and at the Manchester Arena; the attack on worshipers leaving a Mosque in Finsbury Park (was this a terrorist attack? It was certainly an attack

designed to create terror); and the horrific fire in Grenfell Tower; not to mention the Brexit negotiations (oh dear, I mentioned them) have all shown that these are not normal times.

All of these events cast a shadow of fear. And the way they are reported often deepens the sense of panic and fear people feel, mostly unintentionally but some less scrupulous media outlets do seem to delight in turning tragic and painful experiences into opportunities to increase the sense of fear that many people live with. It is very easy to imagine that, in the words of Private Fraser from Dad's Army, 'we're all doomed'.

How do we respond in the face of this climate of fear? Psychologists tell

Christ Church is a joint Methodist and United Reformed Church. It is part of Churches Together in Uxbridge, supports Hillingdon Inter-Faith Network and is a member of Inclusive Church



us there are two basic responses to fear, Fight and Flight – to run and hide or to turn and fight. Many want to run and hide – in fact it is one of the objectives of terrorism to make people run and hide, to disrupt normal social life, to cause people to want to stay at home and not go to public places, to cause society to grind to a halt. Some choose to fight – to become aggressive with words or actions. I have no idea what the motives of Darren Osborne were when he drove his van into the group of men outside the Finsbury Park Mosque but it does seem to me that it was an attempt at some misguided and misdirected form of fighting back.

Faith though, I think, should offer us an alternative to Fight or Flight. So what does our faith say to us in a time of tragedy and fear? The first thing I note is that having faith does not take away either the fear or the pain of tragedy. Nor does it offer us some false platitude, it does not

say, ‘there, there, it’ll be all right. It must be said, at its worst faith can itself be the source of fear (though personally I think it is often just a tool used by people with other motives).

What I think faith can and should do is influence our perspective on a situation, colour our reactions and response, shape our frame of mind and direct our feelings. Faith can help us see beyond the attacks by a minority of Muslims, or Christians, to the vast majority who are peace loving and live side by side quite harmoniously. Faith can help us see that despite the reasons to fear there are far more reasons to hope, there are far more people doing good than doing harm, in the face of suffering and loss there always people willing to make sacrifices to help. Faith can change how we see things and in turn how we respond to tragedies.

In that way Faith can give strength, to individuals and to

communities. It can be the supporting rod that prevents us from bending and breaking under the pressure of fear. To keep the alliteration with Fear and Faith, faith gives Fortitude, strength not to buckle but to maintain hope and continue to live positively and courageously in times of fear.

In these times of fear, may our faith be a source of fortitude. May we not listen to those voices that seek to make fear and terror fill our hearts but rather work to build a positive, strong and caring society.

Wishing you every blessing
Nick Skelding

Transformation, forgiveness and love

In May I received an invitation to attend Official Vespers and a Reception at the Coptic Orthodox Cathedral at Stevenage. As I drove into

Shephalbury Manor, where the Cathedral of St Mark is located, I was immediately greeted by security: armed police along the driveway and airport style searches; we had been told not to mention the event on social media both before and in the days afterwards. The reason was because His Holiness Pope Tawdros II, Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of Saint Mark, was making his first pastoral visit to the UK and members of the Coptic Orthodox Church together with friends, both ecumenical and members of different faiths, were gathered together for the Official Vespers in his presence.

Two weeks before the Evensong, on Palm Sunday, forty four Christians had been killed in Egypt. First there was a targeted bombing of the Church of Saint George in Tanta and, a few hours later, there was a second bombing in Alexandria as worshippers left a Palm Sunday Liturgy that was

officiated by HH Pope Tawadros II. Members of the security services who attempted to foil the second bombing in Alexandria also lost their lives.

Then, last month, twenty nine Coptic Christians, including women and children, were massacred on a desert road in Minya en route to a pilgrimage site. Bishop Makarios, the senior Coptic Orthodox cleric in Minya, stated that the Christian men were ordered off the bus and were told that they would be spared if they renounced their Christian faith. "They chose death", he said. "We take pride to die while holding onto our faith". I wonder how I would have responded in such a situation. His Grace Bishop Angaelos, General Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Great Britain, upon hearing the news of the massacre, preached on the need for forgiveness; 'we should be

prepared to forgive regardless of what is to come', he said. When a Sky News reporter asked him about fear among Coptic Christians, Bishop Angaelos replied that he had never heard the word 'fearful' being mentioned by any member of the Coptic Community; 'it's not part of our DNA. We're peaceful, loving, sacrificial and forgiving people, and yet we are still persecuted'.

In a statement that he requested by widely disseminated, Bishop Angaelos wrote:

"You are loved by God, your Creator, for He created you in His Image and according to His Likeness..... You are loved by me and millions like me because I, and we, believe in transformation.

Transformation is core to the Christian message for throughout history we have seen

many transformed from being those who persecuted Christ Himself and Christians, to those who went on to live with grace. We believe in transformation because, on a daily basis, we are personally transformed from a life of human weakness and sinfulness to a life of power and righteousness. We believe in transformation because the whole message of the Cross and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is to take humanity from the bonds of sin and death to a liberation in goodness and everlasting life. Our world is certainly suffering from the brokenness of our humanity, but it is our responsibility, personally and collectively, to encourage and inspire ourselves, and all those whom we meet along our path, to a life of virtue and holiness, and the love and forgiveness of all."

I was immensely challenged by Bishop Angaelos' words.

Joy Barrow

Business as usual - is it fit for purpose?

Writing some months ago in 'Look-in', I had the temerity to question adherence to a lectionary. That brought down on my head the wrath of the gods. Both in written and spoken "advice" I was put right. However, I am unrepentant!

Oh yes, I know that preachers may discard the lectionary on any given Sunday. In practice few ever do. One even told me that it was more than he/she dare do. Oh yes, I know the hoary old one about a church somewhere that got the parable of the Good Samaritan five Sundays running. (As if five different preachers would have had exactly the same insights into this multi-faceted piece of Jesus' teaching!)

Oh yes, I know the argument that the three year rolling programme of readings opens up more of the Bible to

congregations. So we omit parables (and the minatory sayings of Jesus) in favour of Habbakuk and Obadiah!!

Very recently we have been witness to traumatic events. Westminster Bridge, Manchester, London Bridge, Borough Market and Finsbury Park Mosque and, perhaps most appallingly of all, the fire in Grenfell Tower. (I shall not soon forget the sight of the family silhouetted in a window and waving, and surrounded by flames and smoke and then who were gone.) None of these would have been foreseen by the learned churchmen/women who composed a three year lectionary. Nor could they have been. Left free, preachers could have sat down to wonder how they could make sense to a numbed and dispirited congregation or someone making a first-ever appearance at worship seeking a clear path.

Perhaps (and only a 'perhaps') to sit alongside the psalmist who

said only fools say there is no God (Psalm14) or the writer of Ecclesiastes (look if you will at Ch 7 v 10). Perhaps to reflect on Jesus' comments about the collapse of the tower at the Pool of Siloam. Or we could have imagined Jesus storming into a meeting of Kensington & Chelsea Council and declaring "you were given charge of housing the poor and you have made the Council a den of thieves and murderers". The Daily Mail would soon have nailed him to its Cross.

On the day after the fire I found a preacher addressing the public in Uxbridge Town Square. He was ranting about a Jesus I could not recognise. He told us that those who had died in Grenfell Tower had gone to bed unaware that they faced judgement. I went up and argued with him (except that he didn't stop!) and his minder appeared in a flash. We had a 'conversation' but I was never

allowed to finish a sentence! I withdrew!

After I was left wondering if those listening had "seen Jesus". But did I think that the lectionary would reveal the 'Man for Others'? I had my doubts!

What do YOU think?

Howard Cooper

My Life After School - Part 10

1959 saw the industry shrinking due to the effect of television, there were fewer films being made and the distributors were playing one laboratory against the other, to get the cheapest prices. It began to look as though there might have to be redundancy in the near future.

It was at this point when going home on a bus one evening, I suddenly had an idea of a different system of negative cutting and a very much

modified optical printer, one could achieve much better quality and much more easily do all optical mixes and many types of special effects and best of all it would mean that the customers would have to pay considerably less.

I spent the rest of that evening and half the night working out all the possibilities and what modifications would be required on the optical printer to achieve them.

I decided to write a memo to the Mechanical and Electronic Departments in the form of a challenge, with copies to all members of the Technical Developments Committee. This I distributed while all were at lunch. An urgent meeting was called that afternoon. I explained what was wanted and it was agreed that work should start right away, with no limit to expense. It took a few months to work it all out and modify a printer for tests.

A completely new system of negative cutting was required, with very different paper work. The Lighting Department also would have to alter all their methods and paperwork.

After successfully testing the whole thing through with all departments once everything was ready it was decided to do a short film. The film unit of Shell International was one of our customers and were very agreeable to making a film entitled Shellarama. This film showed off the new system to good effect and was used as our demonstration film. With a good write up, it was offered to the industry with great success. We were soon scooping the market. It was a great turning point. The first feature film to use the system was 'El Cid'. This started shooting early 1960 and was followed by all features going through Technicolor from then on.

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One thing I haven't mentioned so far, was my liking for making



toys for the girls over the years. Dolls houses, cots, wardrobes, tables with chairs and a larger chair of the same pattern for the young lady. In later years this carried on to making toys for the grandchildren, two girls and two boys. No doubt I shall be doing it for my three great grandchildren.

1959 was a not so good year from the point of view of Carmen's health. She had a problem with her thyroid gland and ultimately it had to be removed completely, which

meant a cut right round from ear to ear. This was carried out at The Cottage Hospital in Harefield Road. It left her in a very low state. The doctor said it would be the best idea if we could get away to the sea for a holiday. We were lucky in that Nell and Arthur Russell were great friends, Nell having been the Sister at the hospital in Kingston Lane.

It was decided that we would all go for two weeks to Sandown on the Isle of Wight. This went very well until I received a telegram to tell me that my Father had died. It was a great release for him. He had been suffering from lung cancer which had spread, for quite a long time.

I had to leave the family with Nell and Arthur to go home for a suit etc, then make my way to Wye in Kent. My Mother was bearing up well, but was very tired having looked after my Father so long, as a complete invalid. My Father had been gassed in the First World War and

had suffered ever since. He was 69 when he died.

I stayed a few days to cover the funeral and to make sure that Mother would be OK. Then made my way back to Carmen, as I was very worried about her. I found her in better spirits than I thought, she had had a tough time recently keeping up with everything at home and still coming to the various functions.

Also in 1960 Carmen and I went shopping for some wallpaper one Saturday and came back with our first car - a clapped out old Vauxhall Victor, which we bought from Gregory's garage in the High Street. That lasted a year, then we bought a second Victor and after 3 more years a third and latest Victor.

Anthea left the school in Stanmore and went to the Catholic school in Vine Lane. She made many friends there and still keeps in touch to this day.

Syd Wilson

Churches Prayer Diary

w/c 2nd July - Ruislip Manor
Methodist

w/c 9th July - South Harrow
Methodist

w/c 16th July - South Ruislip
Methodist

w/c 23rd July - Trinity

w/c 30th July - Wealdstone
Methodist

w/c 6th August - Yiewsley
Methodist

w/c 13th August - Cannon Lane
Methodist

w/c 20th August - Christ Church

w/c 27th August - Eastcote
Methodist

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08-10-2015

**LOOK AT ALL THESE PUPPIES AND KITTENS
THAT I HAVE ... HOW CAN YOU NOT LET
ME IN?**

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Church Calendar

All events are at Christ Church unless indicated by an X in the final column

Day/Date	Event	Group	
July			
Tue 4	Tuesday Club	Church	
Thu 6	Pop-In	Church	
Fri 7	Awards Evening	BB/GB	
Sat 8	Saturday Morning Coffee	See separate rota	
	Quiz Evening	Church	
Sun 9	Sunday Lunch	See separate rota	
	Church Parade	BB/GB	
Tue 11	Tuesday Club	Church	
Thu 13	Craft Group	Church	
Fri 14	End of Session Barbecue	BB/GB	
Sat 15	Saturday Morning Coffee	See separate rota	
Tue 18	Tuesday Club	Church	
Thu 20	Pop-In	Church	
Sat 22	Saturday Morning Coffee	See separate rota	
Tue 25	Worship Planning Group	Church	
Thu 27	Craft Group	Church	
Sat 29	Saturday Morning Coffee	See separate rota	
August			
Thu 3	Pop-In	Church	
Sat 5	Saturday Morning Coffee	See separate rota	
Thu 10	Craft group	Church	
Sat 12	Saturday Morning Coffee	See separate rota	
Sun 13	Sunday lunch	See separate rota	
Thu 17	Pop-in	Church	
Sat 19	Saturday Morning Coffee	See separate rota	
Thu 24	Craft group	Church	
Sat 26	Saturday Morning Coffee	See separate rota	
Tue 29	Worship Planning Group	Church	
Thu 31	Pop-in	Church	

WHO'S

Christ Church
Redford Way
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01895 258956

Registered charity
no. 1139255

Ministry team:
Rev'd Nicholas
Skelding
Deacon Claire Gill

Administrator
Martin Vowles
01895 258956

Contacts via office for:

Brigades:
Girls' -
Stephanie Marr
Boys' -
Paul Edgeworth

Junior Church
Club -
Jenny Peet

Tuesday Club -
Wendy Pollard

Prayer Tree -
Val Bailey
Rosemary Moere

WHO!

July Services

(All services are 11am unless stated otherwise)

- 2nd Rev'd Nick Skelding (Holy Communion)
9th Rev'd Nick Skelding (All Age Worship)
16th Rev'd David Cornick (URC minister, General Secretary
Churches Together in England)
23rd Rev'd Nick Skelding
30th Christ Church Worship Group

August Services

- 6th Rev'd Nick Skelding (Holy Communion)
13th Rev'd John Swarbrick (Methodist minister)
20th Rev'd James Fields (URC minister)
27th Mrs Anne Byfield (URC lay preacher)

Look-In

Please help us to produce an interesting newsletter by handing in news items or articles to the office, or sending them by email to Louise George (publicity@christchurchuxbridge.org.uk). The next issue of Look-In will be the September issue and the deadline for articles for this is Friday 25th August 2017.

E-mail: Office@christchurchuxbridge.org.uk

Website: www.christchurchuxbridge.org.uk

Counselling and support are offered by:

Communicare Counselling Service

01895 256056

Samaritans

01895 253355

Hillingdon Mind

01895 271559