

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY: Wednesday 15th March 2023

By Revd Kit Gunasekera

What ultimately matters is love

I was impressed by this piece in the Church Times last Friday. Its a review of an article by Anna Tims, in the Guardian, about her experience working in a hospice. It says:

"She realised that she wanted to become a volunteer while listening to a tragedy on the radio one morning: "I had never seen body. I'm frightened of the raw grief of others and I'm squeamish about blood. My volunteering roles have always been with children. I'm used to beginnings, not endings.

Yet by the end of the story, she was transformed: "Hospice volunteering has changed my understanding of life and death. There are no happy endings in the conventional sense. The patients won't get better. One has to accept one can't save them. There is no counsel or comfort one can offer strangers facing the inevitable. That's been hard to learn.

"Now...when I finish a hospice shift, I want to take back into the outside world that sense of life stripped back to its essentials, where what ultimately matters is love"

Reminds me of what appears at the end of the great chapter about love in 1 Corinthians 13:13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

BIBLE VERSE:

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. - 1 John 4:16

BIBLE PASSAGE: 1 Corinthians 13

13 If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a

faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. 3 If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

8 Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. 11 When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. 12 For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

PRAYER:

Lord, you have taught us
that all our doings without love are nothing worth:
send your Holy Spirit
and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of love,
the true bond of peace and of all virtues...
Grant this for your only Son Jesus Christ's sake,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

- From a Prayer from the Church of England

Come, O Christ the Light, and lead us. Come, O Christ the Life, and revive us.
Come, O Christ the Physician and heal us. Come, O Christ, the Fire Divine,
and kindle in our hearts the flame of your love. Amen.

Dimitri of Rostov (1651–1709)