

16th April 2020

Differences

**“Where order in variety we see,
And where, though all things differ, we agree.”**

Alexander Pope, Windsor Forest

Those who follow my “Thought for the Day” on my blog will know that many of the images I use are of Port Seton harbour. The working harbour in our village is a constant source of pleasure for residents and visitors alike. On a walk with my wife the other day, I stopped at the harbour to take yet another picture, remarking that, even though I had lots of photographs from the same spot, each one was unlike any of the others. “Quite right,” she said. “It’s always the same, yet always different.”

Always the same, yet always different ... The harbour is the harbour. It’s always the same. But with the changing light, the shape of the clouds, the rising tide, the movement of the boats, the position of the sun, the rippling of the water, it’s always, always, different.

There’s a lot of thinking going on for people just now – reflecting, pondering, adjusting, deciding. For me, there’s the thread of “What stays the same?” What are the safe, secure, unalterable things in my life? And, “What’s different?” What changes, shifts, has a transient quality? What I thought was permanent might turn out to be changeable. Perhaps what never changes might begin to mean more than ever before.

Alphonse Karr was editor of the French newspaper, *Le Figaro*, in the mid-19th century. He was well known for his pithy epigrams, such as *Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose*, usually translated as “The more things change, the more they stay the same.” I think Alphonse Karr must have been a regular at Port Seton harbour. If he wasn’t, maybe he got the essence of his affirmation from being somewhere similar.

So, what changes for you and what doesn’t? What stays the same and what’s different? How do you differentiate between the two? You could do worse than visit Port Seton harbour as you try to work it out.

A prayer for today

‘Alpha and Omega’ God, you tell me you stay the same. Help me decide what should stay the same and what should change for me today. Amen.

An original reflection by © Tom Gordon

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