

15th August 2020

Memory

“A memory of yesterday’s pleasures, a fear of tomorrow’s dangers, a straw under my knee, a noise in mine ear, a light in mine eye, an anything, a nothing, a fancy, a chimera in my brain, troubles me in my prayer. So certainly there is nothing, nothing in spiritual things, perfect in this world.”

John Donne, LXXX Sermons

I’ve discovered something about myself during lockdown that I hadn’t been aware of. I thought it was a bad at first, but I’ve decided it’s a good thing. In recent months, I’ve realised I don’t have a great memory for detail. I don’t think I’m *losing* my memory, though the years could well be affecting it in some way or another. It’s just that I’ve realised that this lack of remembering detail has probably been with me for a long time.

Take, for example, the propensity for BBC and ITV to show old football matches in recent months – World Cups, Premier Leagues, Cup Finals, European Championships – most of which I’d seen already, and some I’d watched live. A Scotland match against Brazil. A Rangers game with Celtic. Spain versus Germany, or whatever, all memorable and significant games. But I couldn’t remember the outcome when the game kicked off. I could remember *some* things as the game unfolded – a great goal, a sending-off, a penalty shoot-out. But I *couldn’t remember the result*. My football-loving friends will laugh at me, I’m sure. “Surely, surely, you can remember *that* game, Tom,” I hear them say. Well, clearly, not!

To be honest, it worried me. Losing my memory? But then I realised it didn’t really matter. Indeed, it was a *good* thing, for I could take pleasure in the moment and watch each match as if it was for the first time.

It’s the same with the rerun of the first series of *Broadchurch*. The final episode was riveting, because *I couldn’t remember who’d done it!* It happens with old episodes of *Vera* or *Midsomer Murders* or *Poirot* too. *I can’t remember ...* But, I’ve stopped worrying about it, and I’m finding new enjoyments – just as good as the old ones. When “yesterday’s pleasures” are no longer in the memory, today’s pleasures will do just fine, thank you.

A prayer for today

*Lord, let every moment of experiencing your love for me
feel like I’m discovering it for the very first time. Amen*

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