

2nd November 2020

Greetings

**“If I should meet thee after long years,
How should I greet thee? With silence and tears.”**

Lord Byron, When we too are parted

One of the few delights of living with the Covid-19 restrictions are the things people do to cheer one another up – like sharing funny videoclips on Social Media. Dogs, cats, accidents, surprising moments, are all designed to make us smile. The best ones for me are the antics of children.

A friend posted a clip of a child being baptised in a Catholic church. – the priest holding the baby at the font; the parents and godparents (suitably face-masked) watching in admiration; and a little girl, presumably an older sibling, standing watching, completely engrossed in the event. The baptism completed, the priest leaned over to bless the little girl, raising his hand above her head, ready to say the words of the blessing. The little girl was having none of it! This was not something she was familiar with. So she did what she knew, raised her hand too, and gave the surprised priest a robust and glorious “high five”. Were there words with *this* blessing? Was there a “liturgy of the high five”? No need! The laughter and smiles in response to this spontaneous greeting were enough.

“How should I greet thee?”, Lord Byron asked – after years of being parted from a loved one. But how should we greet one another at *any* time? Silence and tears? Handshakes or high-fives? Kisses on the cheek – one, two, or three, depending on the social norms? Hugs – titchy hugs or bear-hug embraces? You’ll find your way. You’ll know what’s expected in this setting or that, with one person or another (Covid restrictions permitting of course). But however it happens, now or later, from childhood onwards, expected or spontaneous, physical or digital, our greetings matter, because they’re all indicators of the love we share.

In his letter to the Romans, St Paul suggests we “Greet one another with a holy kiss.” Whatever that “holy kiss” is for you, make sure your love is properly expressed. Now, where’s that little child who’ll give me a greeting with a robust glorious high-five?

A prayer for today

Lord, greet me today with your Blessing as I greet others with your Love. Amen

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