

27th December 2020

Endings

“Fuimus Troes, fuit Ilium et ingens Gloria Teucrorum.

“We Trojans are at an end,

Ilium has ended and the vast glory of the Trojans.”

Virgil, Aeneid Book 2

Like the Trojans of old, we're all having to cope with endings. Restrictions on our movements and the “window” of Christmas celebrations laid out for us by Government regulations squeezed our celebrations into one day rather than having them spread out over an extended period. The “twelve days of Christmas”, between Jesus' birth and the marking of Epiphany on January 6th, have been chopped down. It feels like we're having to cope with the end of Christmas much sooner than normal.

I hate endings. When I say goodbye to people who've been visiting, I want it over quickly: no lingering chat on the doorstep; no drawn-out conversation. When I see someone off at an airport or train-station, it's farewell and go: no waiting till the plane's taken off; no waving as the train departs. Goodbyes *do* matter. But I've never been good at drawing them out. So, why am I frustrated that my Christmas is reduced by regulations and restrictions? Why do I want to hold on to what seems altogether too short or fleeting? Why am I now lingering over an ending?

I suspect it's because of what Christmas has meant to me at the end of this awful year: the hope it has brought; the importance of sharing love with family which, too often, has been taken for granted; taking the opportunity to say and do what, at other times, would have remained unspoken or unfinished; seeing the value of light and love in dark times.

Might it be that important things have been obscured by tradition, familiarity, norms, because it's been easier that way? In “normal” times, I don't have to think, reflect, interpret or make decisions. But *this* year it's different. What we've come through has forced us to look at important things in new ways. And that, actually, may be a very good thing.

Dealing with endings differently now is a sign that I'm thinking differently about lots of important things. I hope *that* never ends.

A prayer for today

Alpha and Omega, God of beginnings and endings, wait with me while I let go of this, and bear with me as I begin to tackle that. Thank you. Amen.

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