

25th February 2021

No!

“If revolution is the kicking down of a rotten door, evolution is more like pushing the stone from the mouth of the tomb. There is an Easter energy about it, a sense of arrival rather than wreckage.”

Seamus Heaney, in “Observer” 1998

Today, more than on most days, I’m writing from the heart, following the Scottish Government’s announcement that in its “Lockdown Road Map” there will possibly be no returning to corporate worship, even with limited numbers, until Monday 5th April, the day after Easter. It prompted one minister colleague to say: “That’s another year Easter won’t be the same!”

And I say: “NO!” “No!” and again, “NO!” Our *marking* of Easter may not be the same. Our style of worship for Easter may not be the same. Our family gatherings over Easter may not be the same. Our egg-rolling, holidays, visits, trips, traditions may not be the same. (And to be fair, that’s what my colleague meant.) But *Easter* not being the same? No! No! No!

The meaning of my Easter will not be taken from me by any set of restrictions, change in arrangements, legal requirements, places to go and things to do or not to do. I already carry with me Seamus Heaney’s “evolution” in the meaning of Easter. The stone has already been pushed away from the front of the tomb for me. I have an Easter energy. There is – in Heaney’s words – already a sense of arrival, of newness, of purpose. There is no wreckage, no disappointment, no restrictions in my Easter.

It matters little how I *celebrate* Easter this year or what anyone tells me I can or cannot do. Did I think about this year after year when I led Easter worship, and sang “Thine be the Glory” – loudly! – and shouted my Easter “Hallelujahs”? No, I didn’t, because I didn’t have to. I did what I’d always done, perhaps without a lot of thought. But now, two years in a row, I’ve *had* to think about it, and work it out, and interpret it anew. And my conclusion? NOTHING can take away my Easter!

Easter not being the same? Not at all, not when I may be going around for the rest of Lent shouting “Yes! “Yes!!” “YES!!!”

A prayer for today

Today I say “Yes!” to my Easter, not waiting, not wondering, not hoping, not questioning, just knowing that Easter is already announcing its arrival for me.

An original reflection by © Tom Gordon

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