

31st March 2021

Lasting

“Pourvu que ça dure!” “Let’s hope it lasts!”

Laetitia Bonaparte, Napoleon’s mother when he became emperor in 1804 (attrib)

At the beginning of the first lockdown, I prepared a “Thought for the Day” around the intriguing appearance of a line of painted stones along the Port Seton Esplanade. Now the stones people wanted to keep have been fixed in a colourful display at the end of the Esplanade. As I spent time among these stones the other day, they spoke to me of the good things that will surely last when this pandemic is behind us.

What will last for us on our journey in Lent this year and as we move through Holy Week? The good things – like Faith, Hope and Love, as St Paul told us – will last, and our stones will shout aloud with their stories.

‘What lasts?’ we ask, when pondering the worth of what we’ve done.

What will the world remember when each one is dead and gone?

What impact will remain to show the difference we’ve made?

And will we be remembered as the ones who’ve made the grade?

Will generations yet to come recall what we’ve achieved?

Might they rejoice and marvel at the tapestry we’ve weaved?

Can signs remain forever showing we’ve been past this way?

Will changes we have made out-live the passing of our day?

Will what we thought was special be remembered by the rest?

Might we be singled out for praise reserved for just the best?

Will what we have accomplished mean a plaque can mark our fame?

Will people talk of eminence when mentioning our name?

O, child, you’ll be remembered not by things that will not last,

Like merit, style or prominence, or kudos, rank or class,

Or accolades that make you seem august and grandiose,

But by your help for others who have needed you the most.

Where love has changed a life, then you’ll be worthy of our praise.

Where brokenness found healing, then a voice in thanks we’ll raise.

When poverty was challenged, then you’ll be recalled with pride.

If justice was your watchword, then your worth can’t be denied.

The things of time will soon decay and crumble into dust.

For transience can never offer substance we can trust.

If you would be immortal, kiss the things of time goodbye,

And grasp what is eternal – then your love will never die.

An original reflection by © Tom Gordon. Also available at <https://swallowsnestnet.wordpress.com>

The poem “What lasts” is from ‘A Blessing to Follow’ by Tom Gordon, www.ionabooks.com