

24th April 2021

Forever

“Plus uno maneat perenne saeclo.”

“May it live and last for more than a century.”

Catullus, Carmina No. 1

Some months ago I discovered lots of 6'x6'x6' concrete blocks hidden in the woods by the Longniddry shoreline, and reflected on the World War II defence provided by these protective structures. Last week, walking towards Aberlady, I came across many more, but this time not concealed by undergrowth and trees. They stood proud, visible and immovable. Some had been errored by the weather. A few had toppled over. But most of them stood where they had been placed, still solid, lasting and strong.

In all the changes that are around us, we need solid things that will stand the test of time. While the landscape about us will change, while dangers we face will be different, while pathways we tread will inevitably alter, we are reminded that we need solid things that will last forever.

Gaius Valerius Catullus was a Latin poet of the first century BC Roman Republic. Unlike many of his predecessors and contemporaries, his poems were personal and didn't focus on the lives of the gods and classical heroes, many of them arising out of the deep love he had for a woman he calls Lesbia, believed to be the Roman aristocrat, Clodia Metelli. One poem begins, *Vivamus, mea Lesbia, atque amemus* – “My sweetest Lesbia, let us live and love”. It was such a love as this that caused him to wish that it would “live and last more than a century”. Catullus had hit upon what he needed to last forever in his life.

What solid building blocks might we scatter along the shoreline of our lives that will last, and last? What will we leave behind us that will be discovered by generations yet to come so they can be amazed at what really mattered to us? What of our love will “live and last more than a century”, and maybe even outlive time itself?

St Paul wrote, “There are three things that last forever, faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.” Might the love we build today to be part of that solid Love that needs to last forever?

A prayer for today

Let the blocks of love I build be images of God's Love.

May they last forever, as God's Love does for me. Amen

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