

25<sup>th</sup> May 2021

## Shouts

**"Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy Shepherd Boy!"**

*William Wordsworth, Intimations of Immortality*

I may or not get to Hampden Park in June to watch Scotland's home-games in the Euro Championships. It depends on Covid regulations and being lucky in a ballot. However, one thing is sure, I *will* be shouting for my team. Coming back from Glasgow with my mates, with a crowd in a beer-garden, or coming into my kitchen after watching Scotland on TV, I will be hoarse with shouting. How can you not shout for your team?

As William Wordsworth reminisced about his childhood in his ode, *Intimations of Immortality*, he recalled with affection the spontaneous joy of children. Whether a happy Shepherd Boy or not, the shouting of children was precious to him. In one of my early "Thought for the Day" pieces, as the first lockdown took effect and children's playparks were left empty, I wrote about how much I was missing the voices of children, shouts and all. I know what Wordsworth meant, and I suspect you do too.

There are shouts of fear and pain too. Rudyard Kipling wrote of "the tumult and the shouting" of war in his powerful poem, *Recessional*. Even the bible has Job reflecting on the sounds of battle, when he talks about "the thunder of the captains, and the shouting".

But perhaps the most destructive kind of shouting is when it is directed *at* someone, usually in an angry, and often uncontrolled, fashion. Consider domestic abuse, especially during this year of Covid. Confined to a small space, dealing with financial and other pressures, someone takes it out on someone else. Violence may result. Mental abuse may be prevalent. But it often begins with shouting and escalates from there.

So let's give ourselves to shouting in support of our team. Let's encourage the shouts of unbounded joy of our children. But let's beware of what John Milton described in *Paradise Lost* as:

*A shout that tore hell's concave, and beyond  
Frightened the reign of Chaos and old Night.*

For no one ever benefits from shouts like that ...

### A prayer for today

*Lord, may my shouts of joy never be silent,  
and my shouts of anger never be heard. Amen*