

1st January 2022

Bless

“Bless this house, O Lord, I pray.”

Helen Taylor and May Brahe, Bless this House

During a refurbishment programme in my hospice, the Day Unit was to be revamped, and, as a result, was closed for several months. The Day Care patients had to be accommodated in another part of the building, but numbers were limited, and programmes inevitably curtailed. It was, therefore, a day of great rejoicing when people were permitted to use the Day Unit again. There was much anticipation. Familiar faces returned, joined by new patients. The excitement was palpable.

One of the first to arrive was Anna, an elderly lady whom we knew well. She hung her coat up and made her way into the shiny new Unit. But instead of taking a seat with the others, she walked into the centre of the room and slowly began to turn around, as if she was taking in every corner of the place. She was still there as more patients and other staff began to arrive. No one stopped her. And by the time everyone had assembled, she was still standing, gazing around, in the middle of the room.

Then Anna began to sing, beautifully, in an elderly but pure and strong voice. And her song? It was none other than the evocative 1932 song by Helen Taylor and May Brahe, *Bless this House*.

*Bless this house, O Lord we pray, make it safe by night and day.
Bless these walls so firm and stout, keeping want and trouble out.
Bless the roof and chimneys tall; let thy peace lie overall.
Bless this door that it may prove ever open to joy and love*

*Bless these windows shining bright letting in God's Heavenly light.
Bless the hearth, ablazing there, with smoke ascending like a prayer!
Bless the people here within; keep them pure and free from sin.
Bless us all that we may be fit, O Lord, to dwell with thee.*

There wasn't a dry eye in *that* house! I can hear Anna singing yet. It was the best dedication for a new building anyone could have wished for.

Anna's blessing for our Day Unit is my New Year prayer for you, your house, and your circumstances, as a refurbished year is opened up again. May you be richly blessed today, and in the year ahead.

A prayer for today

Loving God, bless the house that is my home. Christ, my companion, bless the house that is my life. Spirit of holiness, bless the house that is my world, and all that it contains. Amen.

An original reflection by © Tom Gordon

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