

27th February 2022

Question

**“All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small,
All thing wise and wonderful, the Lord God made them all.”**

Cecil Frances Alexander, All Things Bright and Beautiful

I don't know who said or wrote: "The day dawns beautiful o'er God's good earth". But these words were sounding in my head as I had my first glimpse of a new day. I'd seen lightening flash before I'd gone to bed. I'd been woken during the night with the ferocity of a storm. I was expecting yet another wild day. But no! The sky is blue. The sea is calm. The birds are singing. The wind is still. "The day dawns beautiful o'er God's good earth".

But over breakfast, I read the horrific news reports of the invasion of Ukraine ... And, wondering what kind of day the Ukrainian people can expect today, and, indeed, what kind of day we can look forward to as a result of what's happening, I am faced with a question: Does God only make "all things bright and beautiful", the things, like a glorious dawn, for which we would wish to give thanks? Or is God also the creator of bad things? If Vladimir Putin is one of God's children, and if he chooses to do what we might consider to be bad things, is God the source of evil as well as good? So today, in the light of "the day dawns beautiful", what am I to make of the people and circumstances where, "the day dawns hellish"?

I don't have an answer to that – at least, not in the space I allow myself for these one-page reflections. So, on this beautiful day, I want to say that I will be wrestling with that question, which, in one way or another, I suspect will be the source of struggles and debate for all of us.

For now, I put the question aside, and I weep with frustration. Today, I let go of my desire that all remains beautiful, and I agonise over a world that contains evil as well as good. Today I shout with anger, and rail against pain and suffering, knowing that, in one way or another, they've always been part of the human condition. So today, because I'm not sure what my prayers should be, or how effective they are, I let my tears speak for me; I let my agonies be my reality; I let my anger be my Godly pleas. Today, on this beautiful morning, I simply pose a question, knowing that, in the days to come, I'll still be working on an answer.

A prayer for today

A question: What's happening, and why? An answer? Not yet, I'm afraid ...