

17<sup>th</sup> March 2022

## Insurance

**"I've seen it all – it's that the worst does happen.  
And you need to be insured."**

*Fargo, US TV series*

*When Bad Things Happen to Good People* is a 1981 book by Rabbi Harold Kushner which addresses the conundrum of "Why? If the universe is created and governed by a God who is of a good and loving nature, but such a world contains suffering and pain, where is God in this? Kushner's explorations of this issue were much more than theoretical. His young son, Aaron, had died of an incurable genetic disease in 1977 at the age of 14.

The title of Kushner's book encapsulates the heartfelt cries of broken and distressed people in the face of suffering. Like all ministers, I had to wrestle with this, for myself and with others, in my hospice work. Even people with a long-standing faith would complain at the injustice they were experiencing. "Where is God in this?" they would cry, and, more acutely, "Why did God cause this to happen?"

I've explored the question "Why?" in the midst of suffering before, so I simply reiterate that the question "Why?" isn't a question, even though it has a question-mark after it. It's a cry of pain which will not be dismissed with an answer or a reason but needs to be embraced by our loving and lasting compassion. But I've been pondering another angle on it this week.

I've renewed my car insurance. But my payment won't protect me from random accidents. Yet some believe we can take out a Christian insurance against the vagaries of the human condition. I remember a patient who railed against God. A profoundly Christian woman, she complained that "God had done the dirty" and "reneged on the deal." "I've paid my dues," she cried, "lived a good life. So why this cancer? Why now? Why me?" Faith was the "dues" she'd paid. The premium on her insurance policy was up-to-date. So, why had God pulled out of the deal?

Bad things happen to good people because ... bad things happen to good people. There's no divine cause and effect in that. And there is no insurance that can stop bad things happening either. Kushner knew that with the death of his son. Would that we might learn the same lesson.

### **A prayer for today**

*Grant me patience when the question "Why?" brings no answer. Amen.*