

16th June 2022

Constancy

**“It is constancy and it is change:
the age of clockwork morphs into digital days,
but the song of the blackbird remains the same.”**

Simon Armitage, *Queenhood*

Reflecting back over the recent events of our Queen’s Platinum Jubilee, I sourced a copy of the poem specially written by Simon Armitage, the current Poet Laureate, to mark this remarkable occasion. It’s called *Queenhood*, and it touches on important facets of the role and reign of the Queen through the lens of its title from a bygone age. In the first part of the poem, Armitage creates an image, enshrined in the quotation above, of a juxtaposition of constancy and change. I know what he means.

My childhood seventy years ago was in an “age of clockwork”. Seventy years later my grandsons live with “digital days”. Much has been said of what seventy years as a monarch means in this context. “The only constant has been change,” one of the commentators remarked. That’s as true for me as it has been for Her Majesty. And is that not evident in our current circumstances, in politics, society, international tensions, Church life? And yet ... “the song of the blackbird remains the same.” Thank God, the sun rises and sets, the seasons come and go, flowers bloom and birds sing. Is it not worth our while pondering that for a moment?

Those of us who have lived through the seventy years of our Queen’s reign might, in our later years, bemoan the changes we have to live with. I know I do sometimes. “A grumpy old man,” my wife calls me from time to time. Many of us struggle to adapt to constant changes as the years pass. But rather than living in a world of complaint, and resistance, and yearning for past days, might we not give thought to, and thanks for, what is constant? What is the “song of the blackbird” that remains the same for you today? Family life and love? The glory of a sunset? Friendships? The wonder of a garden? The beauty of our land? Faith? God?

Perhaps, more than ever, we need to focus on constancy in the midst of change and give thanks for that more than we do. After all, when the blackbirds are singing, might they not be saying the same thing?

A prayer for today

Sing on, my blackbird, and remind me of the constancy of important things.