

5th November 2022

PASSIONS

“I cannot walk a single step or make any movement or gesture, sit down, go out ... without feeling some reason for hope or despair, until at last, exasperated by the trammels put upon my actions by my thought, I ... just act as I want to act.”

Sarah Bernhardt, My Double Life

Those of you who know me well can appreciate that I am a man of passion. It doesn't take much to get me fired up about this or that, *and* to voice an opinion. From Scotland at football to the destruction of the natural world, from injustices faced by minorities to frustrations with Church structures, from the state of the roads to the state of the nation. I'm with Sarah Bernhardt. I don't seem to be able to walk a single step without feeling some despair or hope, especially when my passions are aroused.

So, on November 5th, “bonfire night” in the UK, I have a confession to make: I have, in recent times, had a growing sympathy for Guy Fawkes and his fellow conspirators in their attempt to blow up parliament. And if they were to come back and embark on a similar gunpowder plot, I might be happy to join them – and even to light the fuse.

Now, please forgive me. It was but a *fleeting* thought, arising out of an exasperation back in October, when the search for a third Prime Minister in two months was “doing my head in”. Of course, I would never have contemplated seeking to do anyone any harm, despite my frustrations and passions. But I have to confess to the sin of “feeling” it, so I hope I might be given absolution. I've been accused before of being over-political in these pieces, so I'll simply say that my exasperation caused me to let rip with a heartfelt “Aaaarrggghh!!!” and leave it at that.

I hope I don't ever lose my passions, even if they occasionally spill over into frustration and exasperation. I won't go as far as Sarah Bernhardt and “just act as I want to act”. Goodness knows who'd be in the firing line then ... But I hope my passions will always fire me up to be concerned about what's fair and just, good practice rather than bad, integrity rather than dishonesty. After all, if God gave me a mind to think with and emotions to be aroused, shouldn't I be aware of how they might inspire me to be concerned about, and to work for, a better world?

A prayer for today

Lord, you've blessed me with passions and emotions.

Help me direct them to good ends. Amen