

26th January 2023

Today

**"He who, secure within, can say,
Tomorrow, do thy worst, for I have lived today."**

John Dryden, *Imitation of Horace*

Following my "Thought for the Day" recently about "thankfulness", I had an email from a friend. I can do no better than recount the story she shared, and I'm grateful for my friend's permission to do so.

I was reminded of a chance encounter we had last week [on a local] beach. We had spotted a figure in the distance bending over and appearing to be gathering stones, shells etc. As we approached each other we smiled at the young woman, shook hands, wished each other happy New Year, and went our separate ways. As we ambled along the beach with our dogs we saw what she had been doing ... not gathering, but giving, for in the sand she had written "Thank you for today 3.1.23". She was such a lovely young woman and [she'd been] telling us how she used to come up to the beach here from [home] with the Sunday School when she was a child, and they did all the races up and down on the sand. She didn't really know why she had come up this day, she just felt moved to come. And we have never seen her before. She really touched us.

In your mind's eye, pause for a moment, and put yourself into that story. Go back to that beach of your childhood, or one which carries a special significance for you in adult life. Think of it's meaning for you: the races you ran; the wind you felt; the waves that whispered or crashed; the peace you experienced; the solitude, or companionship, you valued; the birds overhead; the beauty of a headland or island; the sand in toes; the dog round your feet; the tears in your eyes; the heartbreak in your soul. Walk that beach again, slowly, to see, and smell, and hear, and feel what it meant to you back then. And then, in your own time, stop, and bend over or kneel down, and write in the sand. There's no one to interrupt you, even to wish you a Happy New Year. It doesn't matter what you write. It'll be washed away by the tide or obliterated by the wind soon enough.

Maybe you'll be appreciating a memory from way back. Or maybe you're happy because of where you find yourself right now. But, whatever you draw on the sand, I'll bet it's something similar to the message of the girl in the story – a simple "thank you". And then with John Dryden you can say: "Tomorrow, do thy worst, for I have lived today."

A prayer for today

Lord, for good or ill, I am called to be in this place, and to say, "Thank you for today."