

7th December 2023

Waste

**"I only feel angry when I see waste,
when I see people throwing away things we could use."**

Mother Teresa, *A Gift for God* (1975)

Our washing-machine has broken down. We've had it for a while, but we reckon it's worth repairing. (I say "we", though this area of our domestic arrangements is entirely in my wife's hands.) So it's sourcing a repair-person; balancing costs of repairs with the purchase of a new machine; being ready for the "call out" charge before anything is done; getting ready for "Mmmmm ... I'm not sure we can get the parts for that"; and more besides. Such is the way of things with broken washing-machines.

If the washing-machine is condemned, it'll have to be disposed of. I don't reckon I can recycle it into a dog-kennel, or a plant stand, or a piece of garden furniture, or the like. Land fill; more waste; our "disposable society"; increased anxiety about the environment.

Notwithstanding the washing-machine issue, did you know that one third of all food produced globally is thrown away; that the UK wastes approximately 9.52 million tonnes of food every year; that the world's food waste could feed upwards of 30 million people a year, yet, in the UK, 8.4 million people live in poverty? Like Mother Teresa, I get angry, *and* when I realise that I'm also part of the problem. So, let's keep that in mind this Christmas. Why not think of giving to food-related charities *before* you descend into the self-indulgence of a season that contains as much a surfeit of mince-pies as it does good will? It's not too late to make better use of what's left of Advent and focus on others as well as ourselves.

On a lighter note, following my recent "Thought for the Day" on the stubby pencil in my father-in-law's waistcoat pocket, a friend responded:

Now, here's a random thought about pencils as, coincidentally I have been tidying my desk and drawers and found dozens. (I keep sharpening them until they can't be held anymore – much to the delight of my grandchildren when they were younger). Thought: I will never have to buy another pencil in my life!

Thank God for a grandmother who still has an endless supply of pencils, who doesn't believe that *everything* needs to be wasted, and for grandchildren who seem to be learning that lesson too.

A prayer for today

Lord, I pray my time won't be wasted when it could be used to benefit others. Amen