31st August 2025

Example

"Since truth and constancy are vain,
Since neither love, nor sense of pain,
Nor force of reason, can persuade,
Then let example be obey'd."

George Granville, 1st Baron Landsdowne, *To Myra*

My friend and colleague, Rev Kathy Galloway, has died. Kathy, a former leader of the Iona Community, had been Head of Christian Aid Scotland, and there's a wonderful tribute to her on Christian Aid Scotland's Facebook Page. It includes an inspiring poem, "The Folk Who Give Life", which Kathy wrote and delivered for the 80th anniversary of *Christian Aid* in March this year. I'll leave you to look it up. It'll certainly be worth it.

For my book *With an Open Eye* (www.ionabooks.com) I wrote a poem about one of those "folk who give life", someone who challenged me in my thinking about giving to others, and set me an incredible example.

Giving

I walked through a station with a friend the other day.
There was a homeless man sitting at the entrance,
a mangy dog beside him, and a paper-cup in his hand.
I went to walk by, because that's what I do –
'Cause I'd already doled out my charitable giving for this week.
And, anyway, we were in a hurry.
But my friend stopped, and opened his wallet,
and stuffed a £20 note into the battered cup.
The guy was speechless – even more than I was.
He looked up and mouthed a silent 'Thank you'.
When I got my voice back, I complained to my friend.
'Why did you do that? He'll only spend it on drink,' I said, sternly.
And my friend just smiled – a knowing smile.
'So, today, for once, he'll have a choice, then,' he said.
'We make choices all the time. But he can't, can he?
I can spend twenty quid without thinking.
Today, £20 is his whole world.'
So I looked across at my friend and tried to give him a silent 'Thank you'.
But I didn't have it in me to give – not yet, in seemed.

A prayer for today

Let the light of your love shine for others, Jesus said. That'll be example enough.

An original reflection © Tom Gordon Also available at https://swallowsnestnet.wordpress.com