

Reflection 24-12-01- C Apokis

Introduction

Illustration: The re-election of Trump

Sorry to begin with a moan.

I am so disappointed with you all – to return after our break in Japan back to MUC to find you let Trump get re-elected!

What happened! How did you manage that?!?

I know you think it is unfair to land that at your feet – who else is there to blame?

The problem of hope is that it constantly needs to be embraced in the face of despair.

Living a Christian life of Hope

The Judeo-Christian tradition is framed with an ever present and abiding hope.

The words of Jeremiah attest to this...

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfil the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah.

Yet we live at time when the misery and despair emanating from the Middle East is as awful as it has been in our lifetime.

The words of Paul promise so much hope for when we gather as Christians.

...that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith

Yet you allowed Trump to be re-elected!

Maybe it is just me – I seem more aware of what is lacking in my faith.

Vox Pop

I find myself gasping and grasping for hope in a time where Trump is re-elected and climate disaster is upon us, wars of suffering and horror in abundance.

I feel like I am fighting a losing battle to avoid despair – so hope is the calling today.

So let me invite you for your thoughts of hope at this time.

Look Up! What're the messages of hope we need to hear this Advent Christmas season?

Look In! How are the messages of hope landing for you this Advent Christmas season?

Look Out! Which messages of hope are worth sharing this Advent Christmas season?

Illustration: My bike was stolen

After a period of dispiriting – undertook the hassle of replacing my bike.

Zest

Article: Feeling Zesty (5 October 2024 *New Scientist*)

While away I read an article from the *New Scientist* about research into the listless feelings of apathy that can afflict us with emotional inertia.

It appears that researchers have been examining zest as a psychological construct

Losing one's zest is a sign of stagnating rather than flourishing – according to this research we need a sense of *self-expansion* to remain happy in life.

In Advent may I suggest – self-expansion – all sounds life like hope to me!

The problem is that when we lose the zest for life that is a sign of depressed hope.

There are two sides to this dynamic of losing our zest – losing our urge for self-expansion – or in the Advent sense losing our hope.

On the one hand we can become resigned to our fate and so stop seeking novel experiences and be reluctant to learn new skills that foster zest.

As Christians generating hope requires us to embrace novel ways and learn new skills to foster hope for ourselves that is worthy of sharing.

Do I really need to learn how to email, zoom, social media?!?

On the other hand, we can place too much importance on a single element of life that is good such as work or family life that it can never fuel all the zest we need.

As Christians we can place too much importance and fixate on a single element of Christian life to fuel zest and Christian hope.

If something is too important be it singing hymns, listening to sermons, reading the bible, prayer, morning tea, belonging to a roster, not attending church!

Whatever is your Christian zest, self-expansion, hope comfort – we know it is hopeful to keep it going but also mixing it up and adding new ways..

Conclusion

The research suggests that restoring our zest is to explore an unfamiliar ways of responding to our circumstances – step outside our comfort zone.

Some of it can be personally related such as taking small well-being boosts such random acts of kindness, witnessing a sunrise, digital Sabbaths etc.

As Christians we too can become resigned to our fate so stop seeking novel experiences and be reluctant to learn new skills that foster zest and Christian hope.

As Christians, generating hope requires to spread the load of our hope

Quote: Kierkegaard (Danish Christian Philosopher)

‘The tragedy of life is that it can only be understood backwards but lived forward’

Living forward is another way of saying living with zest – living with Christian hope

The art of hope is to look forward when your hopes have been dashed

So what about Trump – some demons need prayer and fasting...

On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century **by Timothy Snyder**
(academic)