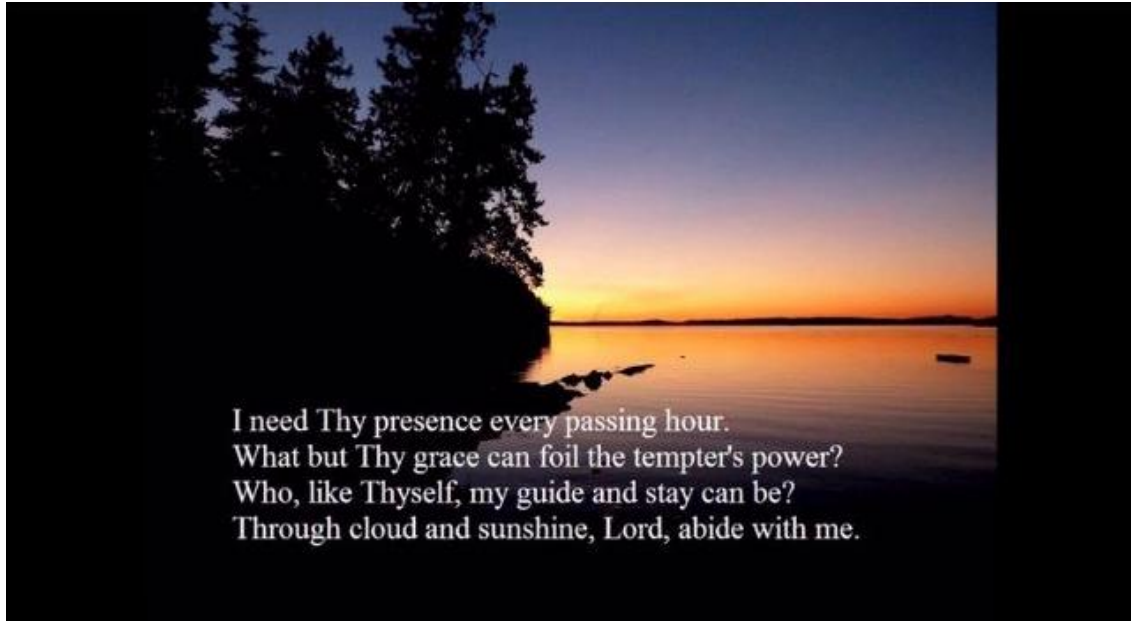


“O thou who changest not, abide with me...”



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We will soon be seeing a new prime minister taking up office. We will be getting used to a new name, a new personality and doubtless, a new broom will be sweeping the offices of state. Some will welcome the changes whilst others will feel disappointed. Whatever changes are introduced there will be winners and losers. Change by its very nature “cannot please all of the people all of the time.” (John Lydgate 1370 -1451)

Sometimes change is brought about after a long and protracted debate involving careful and sensitive negotiation. Such changes are usually introduced slowly over a period of time with the hope that everyone onboard ship will pull in the same direction and that any disagreement will be amicably resolved along the way. Such changes are achieved more by evolution than revolution with most recognising that what is being brought about is for the common good and in the best interests of a country or organisation etc.

At other times change occurs as a reaction against an event. Such change tends to be more upsetting and destabilising and results out of a loss of control, leaving feelings of being overwhelmed. Twelve million people have fled their homes as a result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Such widespread change across Europe will take a number of years to stabilise as consequences for individuals and their families in re-establishing themselves unfolds. Such catastrophic change is unwelcome and disturbs the equilibrium of everyone.

A further change can sometimes be brought about when an individual makes an error of judgement. A politician who fails to abide by expected ethical standards slips from grace and is removed from office by those charged with taking responsibility for holding the boundaries. Similarly, a child who bullies others is, quite rightly, removed from the group and placed on the naughty step to reflect on unacceptable behaviour. The withdrawal of an individual changes the dynamics within the group, the group reconfigures, changed.

And then there is the old English proverb that "a change is as good as a rest." Sometimes a break from routine, be it a job, hobby or the daily round of existence, benefits from the opportunity of doing something differently or stopping altogether. The holiday season will see for many of us a change that will allow for recharging of batteries and having mini adventures away from the everyday normal.

In all of this the human psyche benefits from some set reference points that give a grounding that remains unchanging whatever changes are going on around oneself. It is this 'unchanging' that the vicar and hymn writer Henry Lyte was pointing to when he wrote his famous hymn Abide with me shortly before he died in 1847.

Whatever challenges of change you are currently facing, big or small, know that we are all part of the same human family and that we journey together. This God-given constant is forever unchanging and means that whoever you are, wherever you live, or from wherever you have travelled, we abide with each other - always have done and always will do – facing the changes together.

God Bless

Revd Mark Bailey