

## Good News

I do not know if you are like me but I do not always look forward to seeing the television news. I wonder what new problem or disaster there will be. So often the news seems to be all doom and gloom. And certainly the situation in places like Syria and Iraq is very serious and often heart-breaking. That people have to suffer to such an extent and for so long is really dreadful.

A few years ago there was a television programme dedicated solely to good news, but sadly – one might perhaps say, inevitably – it did not last long. Bad things just seem to be more newsworthy.

And yet there is much good in our world. There are acts of kindness, of generosity, of selflessness at all levels that help to restore our faith in human nature. There are many unsung heroes who quietly and without making any fuss get on doing good. There are those who work for emergency services and aid agencies. But there are also those small acts of kindness that can do so much to enhance people's lives.

Good news may not be headline-grabbing but it is something that keeps our spirits up and our feet on the ground. And of course good news is at the very heart of our Christian faith: Gospel, Good News.

We heard just now the Gospel passage that will be read in those churches keeping this coming Sunday as Bible Sunday (Luke 4.16-24). Jesus quotes Isaiah's proclamation of release to captives, sight to the blind, liberation to the oppressed. For Isaiah that was something to look forward to, a future hope. But Jesus declares that this prophecy has been fulfilled, has been made a present reality, in himself. Jesus brings liberation, physical, mental and spiritual. He brings hope, new life, life with God.

The ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus had as its very purpose reconciliation between God and humanity, and between human beings. That is the good news of God's love for us and for the whole of his creation. In even the darkest moments there can be hope.

Today marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Aberfan disaster when on 21st October 1966 a colliery spoil tip collapsed onto the village of Aberfan in South Wales, engulfing Pantglas Junior School and neighbouring houses. 116 children and 28 adults were killed. I remember at the time the shock and disbelief at the scale of that tragedy when so many young lives were lost. Yet lessons were learned and some good can come out of such terrible events, to prevent such things happening again.

Quite rightly we continue to remember such events, as well as situations in our world today. It is easy to become despondent, but let us instead try to view them with the eyes of faith, trusting in the God of love.

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Kingsley Boulton*