

Westminster College

IMAGINE

Haiku

takes in
the world
from the heart out

By Raymond Roseliep
(1917-83). American
Roman Catholic priest
and poet.

[Haiku is a Japanese poetic
form of three lines reflecting
on a fleeting moment]

IMAGINE

... a regular
reflection from
me as I journey
with you in this
adventure that
is our life
together at
Westminster.

NEIL

The Light and the Shadow

When cancer killed my mother I was in my early twenties. My father chose a poem to express something of how we were feeling. It will be familiar to many of you; the words are those of Dylan Thomas:

“Do not go gentle into that good night, Old age should burn and rave at close of day: Rage, rage against the dying of the light.”

So begins his lament as he ponders his own father’s dying. Times beyond number I’ve returned to that poem and felt it touch a truth; as violence splinters lives, as accident and illness snatch away someone dear. For a small community we know much of dying and of mourning. We lost Penny and now we have lost Martin. This week Sam led the funeral of Oliver, Luca our chef’s partner who died suddenly. So much dying.

Watching Woolf

We’ve got rather used to the vast hole of the Woolf building that emerged this past year. Now things are moving on at a renewed pace. The preparations are well under way for laying what will become the ground floor, and the hole is rapidly disappearing, never again to see

With the Psalms and with Lamentations, with Jesus at the tomb of Lazarus, scripture breathes into agonies of some of our own losses. The valley of the shadow is a path well trodden in the Bible; weeping and anger can be as fully faithful as any praise.

The rage can be there. Some losses defy all my limited attempts at understanding. Some hurts just leave me without even the beginnings of a word.

Which could be the recipe for despair. The flame of faith could be lost into the flimsy wisp of final smoke and emptiness.

Could be. But doesn’t have to be. There are other poems to be sung, other texts to build a life upon, other voices raised to rekindle a flame that burns bright with hope, trust, love and possibility. I love Dylan Thomas.

daylight. It’s a fascinating and rare thing to have such a close up look at a building emerging from nothing. I can think of all sorts of theological angles and metaphors to take from it. But an aspect we’ve already started talking about with Woolf colleagues is how, together, we might find



But I also love Paul:

“For I am certain of this: neither death nor life, no angel, no prince, nothing that exists, nothing still to come, not any power, or height or depth, nor any created thing, can ever come between us and the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

(Romans 8:38-9

The Jerusalem Bible)

ways to speak into public debate locally about hate crime and its rise. We want much more to emerge from our partnership than just a building.

