

Tyndale Thought for the Day

3rd August 2020



There was a time when the wearing of masks was the habit of those up to no good, trying to hide their identity. Then there was that cheap and rightly censured remark of the prime minister comparing Moslem women wearing the burka to pillar boxes. Whilst today some resist the widespread requirement that we wear face masks, this is surely a critical aspect of “loving our neighbour as ourselves”, not casually giving the infection of the coronavirus to others.

It was not only good old-fashioned Anglo Saxon to wish to meet each other “face to face” but positively Christian – because the human face so precisely expresses personality and the complex of emotions that are us, which includes our vulnerability to all that circumstance and other people may throw at us, all of which is expressed in our faces.

Paul, having explained how Moses had to veil his face when returning to the Israelites from his encounter with God on Sinai so as not to dazzle them, contrasts the old and new covenants by emphasising whenever anyone turns to the Lord “the veil is taken away”, continuing, “with unveiled faces we all reflect the Lord’s glory, and are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory” (2 Cor 3.12–18).

And that is reciprocated by the benediction we find in Numbers 6: “The Lord bless and keep you, the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace”. There you have it. Masks away, and with unveiled faces receive the smile of Almighty God, “face to face”. But for now, for our neighbours sake wear a mask.

John Briggs