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A Candle in the Window

Peter Millar

Encouraging words for tough times

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This is the time to be slow,
Lie low to the wall
Until the bitter weather passes.

Try, as best you can, not to let
The wire brush of doubt
Scrape from your heart
All sense of yourself
And your hesitant light.

If you remain generous,
Time will come good;
And you will find your feet
Again on fresh pastures of promise,
Where the air will be kind
And blushed with beginning.

John O'Donohue, Irish poet and philosopher

*So come my friends, be not afraid, we are so lightly here,
It is in love that we are made, in love we disappear.*

*Ring the bells that still can ring, forget your perfect offering.
There is a crack in everything - that's how the light gets in.*

Both these quotes are from Leonard Cohen

*Ours is along and often silent struggle.
Why do we struggle? Two reasons.
We struggle because we love not because we hate,
And we struggle because our faith in God is alive, not dead.*

Marta Torres, activist.

When I look round at all the poverty and injustice I say to myself; 'thank you God that I am not God'. Then when I remember that in every place of human suffering there are many caring women and men and children, I say to myself, 'thank you God that you are God'. Desmond Tutu

To become aware of the sacramental nature of the cosmos; to be open to the sacramental possibilities of each moment; to see the face of Christ in every person – these things are not novel – but their rediscovery is the beginning of our health.

Ron Ferguson writer and former Leader of the Iona Community

At every beginning, bless our dreaming and our doing.

This is the day we have – full of the mundane and the miraculous, the known and unknown.

Open our eyes to all that is around us. Open our ears to the song the soul yearns to sing.

Open our hearts to the love that lives through us. Open our hands to the task the moment requires.

Let us do this one thing, the thing before us, as if all creation and our very life depend upon it. as if you are bent over, watching and listening and willing to do it well. Carla A. Grosch-Miller.

Restoring a great country's reputation: Words from the well-known UK journalist Andrew Rawnsley following the recent American election.

Only Americans have a vote in their presidential election, but the whole world has a stake. Never more so has this been the case than in 2020. The planet has been mesmerised by the compelling theatre of American democracy. Not only does the winner occupy one of the most potent seats on the planet. America's choice of president can set, confirm or reverse global ideological trends. The Brexit vote in the UK in 2016, our stark break with post-war history, was a harbinger of another great rupture, Donald Trump's victory that November. This, in turn, energised nationalist populists around the planet and encouraged them to think that the future belonged to them. There is already much rune-reading of the long-term reverberations of this US election. A clutch of conservative commentators gleefully note that the Democrats failed to sweep all before them and conclude that left-wing 'identity politics' has been quashed. Yet the larger failure is that of right-wing 'culture war' politics whose ultra-bellicose and previously most successful champion has lost the US presidency by the thumping margin of more than four million votes. In a country that rarely denies a second term to the incumbent, Mr Trump's defeat is a feat as extraordinary as it is welcome. Mr Biden's victory contradicts the notion that we live in an era when it is fatal to be 'the establishment' candidate, disabling to be a seasoned, thoughtful and temperate person and hopeless to be a consensus-seeking moderate. The president-elect vanquished Mr Trump not by offering himself as the left-wing mirror image of the incumbent, but by personifying a contrasting kind of political character. By both reputation and demeanour he is a pragmatist and a unifier. "We always do better as one America" was one of the signature lines of his campaign. No presidential candidate in American history has won as many votes as the man his rival ridiculed as 'Sleepy Joe'. He represents a revival of a kind of politics that many told us was deceased in the opening decades of the 21st century. It is a triumph for the centrist grandad.

Healing a fractured world: Jonathan Sacks who died recently, was for many years the Chief Rabbi of Britain and the Commonwealth. These words are from his book, *To Heal A Fractured World: the Ethics of Responsibility* first published by Continuum in 2005.

In the early twentieth century the outstanding Rabbi Ben-Zion Uziel (1880-1953), delivered a strong statement on the universality of Jewish moral concern. These are his words: The settlement of the world (yishuvo shel olam) in its many ramifications is a precondition and vital need for our attaining our proper way in life. Each country and each nation which respects itself, does not and cannot be satisfied with its narrow boundaries and limited domains. Rather, they desire to bring in all that is good and beautiful, that is helpful and glorious to their national (cultural) treasure. And they wish to give the maximum flow of their own blessings to the heritage of humanity as a whole. Each self-respecting nation desires to establish a link of love and friendship among all nations, for the enrichment of the human storehouse of intellectual and ethical ideas and for the uncovering of the secrets of nature. Happy is the country and happy the nation that can give an account of what it has taken from others, and more importantly, of what it has given to the heritage of all humanity. Woe to the country and nation that encloses itself within its own four cubits and limits itself to its own narrow boundaries, lacking anything of its own to contribute, and lacking the tools to receive from others.