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A Candle in the Window

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Words to encourage us in tough times.

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### **History will remember:**

*History will remember when the world stopped and the flights stayed on the ground. And the cars parked in the street. And the trains didn't run.*

*History will remember when the schools closed and the children stayed indoors, and the medical staff walked towards the fire and they didn't run.*

*History will remember when the people sang on their balconies, in isolation, but so very much together in courage and song.*

*History will remember when the people fought for their old and weak and protected the vulnerable by doing nothing at all.*

*History will remember when the virus left and the houses opened, and the people came out and hugged and kissed and started again.*

*Kinder than before.*

Donna Ashworth.

### **The ancient wisdom:**

If we are ever to find peace either in ourselves or with the world we shall have to learn again that ancient wisdom which alone can give us peace with nature and with God, and which was summed up by Dostoevsky in the words of the Prior of the monastery in which the Brothers Karamasov met: "Brothers, have no fear of human failing. Love a person even in their failings, for that is the semblance of the divine love, and is the highest love on earth. Love all God's creation, the whole and every grain of sand in it. Love every leaf and every ray of God's light. Love the animals, love the plants, love everything. If you love everything you will perceive the divine mystery in things. Once you perceive it, you will begin to comprehend it better every day. And you will come at last to love the whole world with an all embracing love." The late Father Bede Griffiths of India in his popular book 'The Golden String: An Autobiography.'

*\*\*\* There is dignity here – we will exalt it. There is courage here – we will support it. There is humanity here – we will enjoy it. There is a universe in every child – we will share it. There is a voice calling through the chaos of our times; there is a spirit moving across the waters of the world; there is movement, a light, a promise of hope. \*\*\* Philip Andrews*

### **Sad could be happy:**

'Hope has two lovely daughters,' Saint Augustine of Hippo is credited with saying, 'anger and courage. Anger at the way things are and courage to change them.' I think if the human body has two wise daughters, then they are loneliness and vulnerability. Loneliness in order to face your true self and vulnerability enough to tell the story to others. The cruelty of our half-lived lives is a false story of connection based on appearance and comparison, and such connections are parasitic on human community. Those connections glue people together with fear, and tell some that they are enough for themselves, that their loneliness and vulnerability are abated. When I was a school chaplain a young person once wrote a prayer for our end-of-the-day service. He wrote it, he read it out, and then threw it in the bin. I fished it out and framed it and hung it on my wall.....'Dear God. Thank you for putting me on this earth but people can get lonely and I don't like people being lonely cause sometimes I am and it's not a good feeling. So I'd like You to pair them up with someone who is not lonely if you can. Amen.....He read the prayer with such simple truth that I thought I would break. The prayer had a picture at the end of a sad face covered by a raincloud and a happy face in the middle of a sun. Sad could be happy, I understand this to say, or rainy could be sunny. There is such humble conditionality in the structure of the prayer. I don't know if I've ever heard more beautiful usage of the three words 'If you can'. It's as if he understands that there are limits to what God can do but there's no harm in asking. From Padraig O Tuama's 'In the Shelter: Finding Welcome in the Here and Now.'

**Is this true?** *In times of profound change, the learners inherit the earth, while the learned sometimes find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists. Eric Hoffer*

**The long journey:** As we think of the task facing all those who today are working for justice and the healing of our planet I am reminded of some words of Christina Rossetti...' does the road wind uphill all the way? Yes, to the very end. Will the day's journey take the whole day? From morn to night, my friend.' pm

**A Gaelic Blessing:** *May God be with thee in every pass, Jesus be with thee on every hill, Spirit be with thee in every stream, headland, ridge and moor. Each sea and land, each path and meadow, each lying down, each rising up, in the trough of the waves, on the crest of the billows, each step of the journey thou goest.*