

15th July 2023

Remembering

“We have all forgot more than we remember.”

Thomas Fuller, *Gnomologia* (1732)

A few years ago, this news report appeared in the National Press:

Dublin Airport has released a list of odd items left in their Lost and Found department, among which was a headstone, ironically inscribed

YOU WILL NEVER BE FORGOTTEN.

“It’s a grave error,” the paper went on to say. Among the other unclaimed items were any amount of wheelchairs and crutches. (The airport staff suggested that many miraculous cures had obviously taken place within the airport terminals. But no one offered any suggestions as to why a set of “cast-iron dungeon keys” were left at a check-in desk, or a toilet, complete with cistern, was discarded at the airport’s departures entrance.) Wherever the abandoned gravestone was destined, I hope the loved one to which it referred had a better chance of being remembered than the headstone that was meant to mark their grave.

In the Book of Psalms, “remembering” figures regularly: a call on God to remember his people; a call on the people to remember their covenant with God; a call on God not to remember the “sins of my youth”; a call to self-awareness so that, even in the darkest night, the writer will try to remember the goodness of God. This is, perhaps, most powerfully illustrated in Psalm 137, which begins with this heart-rending cry:

By the rivers of Babylon, we sat and wept when we remembered Zion.

In exile, in their darkest days, the people wept when they remembered what it had been like when things were good. Here is humanity’s pain and anguish. But, thankfully, a few verses later, the Psalmist can say:

May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember you.

Even in the worst of his troubles, the Psalmist will remember the blessings of God. It looks like he wasn’t going to abandon his faith to a “Lost and Found” department. Maybe he heard God saying: “You will never be forgotten” – to those who wept by the Rivers of Babylon, or anyone passing through Dublin airport.

A prayer for today

Lord, remember me? Good! Because I remember you.

It looks like remembering matters for both of us. Amen