

29th June 2024

Wishes

“The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men, gang aft a-gley.”

Robert Burns, *To a Mouse*

Enough of football – for now. But disappointments are, unfortunately, still on my mind. I shared with you recently a turning point in my life, when I failed exams in my first year at university, re-evaluating where I was with my academic studies and exploring the calling to ministry that followed. Turning points very often arise from disappointments, when a chosen path comes to a dead end, or you are thrown off course in an unexpected way.

I've had my fair share of disappointments, and others have too. The 1977 movie *Turning Point*, starring Shirley MacLaine and Anne Bancroft, is built around a New York ballet company and the lives of its stars. It was nominated for eleven Academy Awards, including Best Picture, but won none of them, sharing the dubious honour of having the most Oscar nominations but failing in all categories with *The Colour Purple* in 1985. Goodness, those involved with *Turning Point* must have been disappointed. I know I would have been, that's for sure.

But here's a thought ... We will always wish for things – as I'm sure the *Turning Point* people wished for at least *one* Oscar. Desires are, rightly, part of the human condition. If we have no desires, then it never matters what happens – Oscar or no Oscar. But being human, we will wish for this or that, often with gentleness and sometimes with passion. But we *will* have hopes and dreams. And, if we do, we will have to cope, sometimes, with disappointments. But how would we rather live? With no hope, no desires, no dreams, no expectations, just to avoid the pain of disappointments? Or with a heightened awareness of what *might* be possible, and do our best to cope with the disappointments that will inevitably come along? I know which course I would rather choose – and I hope the cast and crew of *Turning Point* did likewise.

“The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men, gang aft a-gley.” So wrote Robert Burns when he'd turned over a field mouse's nest with his plough. I suspect the mouse family got on with constructing a new nest PDQ. So when our “best-laid schemes” bring disappointment, I hope we don't give up on future possibilities – even if we're never likely to win an Oscar!

A prayer for today

Lord, I believe that good wishes are good things. Good, OK? Amen