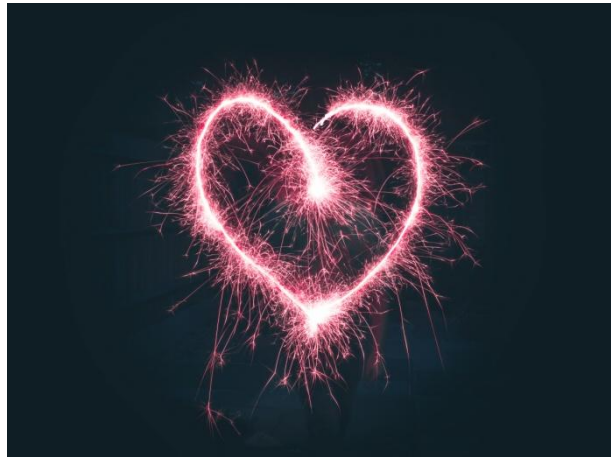


Saturday 31st August 2019



From now on...

*But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him;
he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.*

[Luke 15:20]

There is part of *The Greatest Showman* that reminds me of the story of the Prodigal Son. Barnum dreams big, but it is never enough (also a song in the film!); he keeps on building his fame and fortune, but loses sight of what truly matters. There are many casualties in this story – his wife and daughters, the people in his circus act, his partner Phillip Carlyle, and to some extent his new act Jenny Lind.

Barnum goes from the top to his whole world crashing down. His new act bankrupts him when she gets hurt, his family leave, and the circus burns to the ground. He realises that he has completely lost sight of what is important and starts to seek forgiveness from Phillip, from the circus crew, and from his beloved family. Then he makes the decision that he will start a new life and stick to his promises. 'From now on' is one of the last songs in the film, a reminder that he has started a new life.

For us as Christians, baptism and confirmation are a decision to take a new life in Christ, to turn from all we have done wrong, and to start again in God's forgiveness. There are many hymns about God's forgiveness and turning back to God, walking in God's ways. One hymn is 'When I was lost you came and rescued me' by Kate Simmonds (*Singing the Faith* 367), reminding us that like the father of the prodigal son, God is always looking for us.

*God of amazing, forgiving love,
your love for us astounds us.
Your forgiveness more than we could ever hope for.
You welcome us with loving arms and help us to turn back to you.
Guide us on your paths, lead us in your light,
that we may start again, from now on, coming home to you.
Amen*

Prayers for August 2019 by Revd Claire Rawlinson
Image: photo by Jamie Street on www.unsplash.com