Living into the horizon

Fr Richard Browning

I speak here today in the place of Bishop Stuart Robinson who gives his apologies for his absence.

A young child stood on the cusp of a whole new year
  bewildered
  confused
  uncertain.
It was not the darkness, just the many, competing bright lights.
An older, taller student wearing white came up. Recognising himself from six years before, he simply said “all will be well”.

A young, over wrought person stood on the cusp of a whole new year
  bewildered
  confused
  uncertain,
  overwhelmed.
He went to church, grasping at security, searching for solid, rigid, black and white answers to shield him from a dangerous, uncertain world. The priest and community cared for him then gently disturbed him.

God is not a place in which to escape from the world and reality. Do not be afraid of uncertainty, or even darkness. Follow. Even into the darkness, follow the one who has overcome the darkness. The priest added: “his name is Jesus”.

A young, nervous student stood on the cusp of a whole new school year
  unsure
  uncertain
  open.
An older person stood alongside and pointed to the horizon saying:
this is what we move towards; together we will live into it – it is our values horizon.

They walked and the young student learnt the name of that horizon: wisdom, truth, compassion. They walked. But never alone.
“But how can I always see the horizon?” asked the child. “What if I there is no way out of the woods?” The older student paused, and pressed into the student’s palm a well worn coin, saying: ‘here. Take our compass.’ It was not an ordinary compass. It was marked with three verbs: Respect, listen, imagine.

They walked.

After a time, the older person simply said:
  
  Listen carefully always. Practice giving your attention, non judgmentally, on purpose.
  Only ever give respect. Everywhere. All the time.
  Seek clarity of sight. Always.

Do these three things and you will never get lost.
You will always move towards the horizon.

A young person
  weary
  tested
  troubled
said to the angel who stood at the gate of a whole new year: Give me a light that I might see, a path that I might follow.
The angel said, put your hand into the hand of Love. It is kind and patient, never jealous, does not judge or keep a record of wrongs; Love is always supportive, hopeful, trusting. Love never fails! When all else fails, three things won’t, the greatest of which is love. Put your hand there, and walk towards the horizon, it is surer than a light, safer than a path.

Ladies and gentlemen,
These four short stories are exactly the same.
Do not be afraid.
We do not walk alone. This year of 2016 will be fabulous.
We move and live into our horizon.
And all will be well.
All manner of things will be well.