

Faith Comment published in the Petersfield Post

6 January 2010: Andrew Lyon, St Mary Magdalen, Sheet

What do you hope for?

I had a curious card this Christmas from a distant relative in Southampton. In his note inside he wrote, “nothing of particular interest has happened this year, and we hope that 2010 will be much the same.”

What do you hope for at the start of this new year? Where do you hope to be in life when Christmas comes around again? It’s natural, of course, to hope that nothing awful will happen during the year, but there is, I feel, a slight naivety about waiting in hope for 365 vacant days. Life isn’t like that, and there will, I’m sure, be both good and bad things ahead for us all.

As I look ahead to my own 2010, I know that, realistically, it is very likely my uncle will die from the cancer he was recently diagnosed with. My hope, for him, is that his suffering will be minimal. More cheerfully, it’s also the year of my thirtieth birthday, so I know that, God willing, there will be a certain amount of celebration. Life is full of good and bad things, but what the death and resurrection of Jesus teaches us is that these two “imposters”, as Rudyard Kipling called them, are part of the very nature of human life, and need to be kept in balance. We can’t opt out of this.

My hope for this year is that I will be faithful in my efforts to deepen my relationship with the Lord in prayer, so that when the chips are down I can know his love and support, and when things are going well, I can be genuinely thankful to him for all the good things I am fortunate to have.