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GOOD MORNING

While most of us will have been asleep, Donald Trump and Hilary Clinton have been slugging it out in the first of the Presidential Debates. Memories from my youth come back - of Richard Nixon losing because of his sweating five o'clock shadow - and of more idealistic times when John F Kennedy could catch the imagination of a nation in his inaugural address: 'ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country'

But of course we are in times of great uncertainty - of deeply embedded conflict and economic turbulence. It's not surprising that the past may look simpler, and even happier place. So we have nostalgia in politics and, to be honest, a lot of nostalgia in the world of faith.

But if you want a real challenge to nostalgia, listen to what the Archbishop of Canterbury said last week to the 140th Anniversary of the Mothers Union - a worldwide organisation within the Anglican Communion dedicated to the support of marriage and family life. Taking what I suspect was a very deep breath indeed, he told them that 'the idea of a Victorian golden age of traditional family values is a “myth”. He urged Christians to face up to the reality of divorce, cohabitation and gay marriage in the 21st century - new family structures including same-sex unions are now a reality “whether we agree or not”.

I think it is a great pity when politicians seem to have little to offer beyond nostalgia. And faith gets trapped all too easily in the imagined past - becoming part of the heritage industry. But the big movements at the heart of the bible are about the journey from slavery towards the promised land and Jesus' stories which tell us about the Kingdom of Heaven.

Faith at its best builds on the faithfulness of the past but challenges us to live with a passion for justice, with deep compassion and with a willingness to forgive, let go, move on and build the new.