

A Favourite Month

People sometimes ask which is my favourite month, or season. On balance, just, I'd go for autumn as the season, and probably September as the month. August is great (holidays and birthdays – mine, my brother's, one daughter's) but for me September tops even that.

Second helpings of summer and the first tastes of autumn: the glory of creation with the initial reminders that it is cyclical and nothing lasts for ever. A new academic year (I used to love going back to school.) September has it all: endings, beginnings, harvest appearing, the most temperate month of our temperate climate.

The reminder that nothing lasts for ever, combined with the satisfaction of harvest home – even Elton John singing "Circle of Life" – is so important. Not just because of my personal circumstances, or with the diocese facing endings and a new beginning, but because this is an essential part of creation, of the way things are, in this life.

I suspect that in the new creation, when we discover it, the cyclical nature of things may be no more, but in this world it governs everything. Day and night, the weekly sabbath, the moon and monthly reproductive and tidal cycles, the seasons and the years: these frame the way we live. Life comes and goes, as do youth,



vigour, maturity, wisdom. Everything passes, and everything is renewed or replaced. September is a great reminder of that.

We need to be aware of this, and to live wisely in this circle of life: not to cling onto the old, but hopefully to take the best of it into the new; not to grasp at every new thing, but to discern what is worth nurturing for its season. We can rejoice in the profligacy of creation and re-creation, and not shed too many tears when the natural harvesting or culling takes its course.

But that new creation, to which Christians look forward, hopefully like St Paul with eager longing, will be different. The energy of youth and the maturity of age will combine forever in each of us: no more tears or tiredness, ageing or loss; no more reminder of mortality; no more Septembers.

For now, in this life, happy September!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Donald". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

+Donald
Bishop of Peterborough

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