

Dear Friends,

I don't know if any of you do the same as me but most mornings, I scan the BBC News website for the basic bits of news and usually look at the 'Papers' section too, where images of the front page of most of our nation's newspapers are displayed and a summary of their main articles is given.

Some of them I agree with, others less so; some stories, especially at the moment, make me so sad – that human beings can do so many awful things in the name of religious or national ideology and others; well others make me smile or sometimes even, laugh out loud.

The Daily Star is not a paper that I've ever actually bought a copy of but has had some of the funniest, stupidest, weirdest and entertaining headlines over the last few years. I think they've found their niche in offering some really silly things, just to make us smile...and I think many of us have had need of that since we entered into the Pandemic, then economic turbulence and cost of living crises. One of their longer-running storylines was about who would last longest – Liz Truss as Prime Minister or a lettuce bought for 60p from a Supermarket; it turned out to be the lettuce!

Today's headline story also made me smile and then think on a little...

Next to a picture of Father Ted and his side-kick Father Dougal from the cult TV show that bore Ted's name; the front page alarmingly declared: 'TOP BOFFINS PREDICT PSYCHO ROBOTS WILL SPELL THE END FOR OUR VICARS AND PRIESTS!'

Now, you might think I'd be concerned for my own job security but, it being a Daily Star headline, I smiled and read a little more of an article that was speaking about how some techie-types are predicting that Artificial Intelligence (AI) will replace a whole host of posts currently held by human beings, clergy being just one of these.

As I say, it made me smile and then ponder a while – as I believe that it's the human touch that makes the difference in so many roles, not just those of us that wear tiny bits of white plastic round our necks!

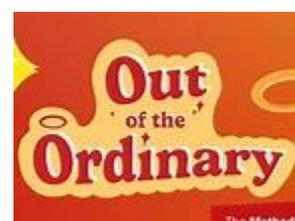
This year's Methodist Church Advent and Christmas campaign focuses on the idea that God's extra-ordinary breaks into and shines out of our very ordinariness: God breaks in, through the coming of Jesus into our lives and God is seen when we live out lives of love and compassion in our world.

So, 'AI' might be able to do amazing things, but I don't think it will ever replace us humans – for in our ordinariness and God-blessed extra-ordinariness, we'll always have something that 'AI' can never have – a HEART!

May Jesus be born again into your ordinary, every-day and in that very place, and your very ordinary, human life, may God's extra-ordinary shine out with love for all those you are likely to meet this Advent and Christmas!

Wishing you, those you love and people the world over - LOVE, PEACE, JOY and HOPE at this very special time of the year!

Sam.



**Resources/Good News**

**Be Born Video**

[\(2\) Be Born \(Official Lyric Video\) - YouTube](#) Taken from the Methodist Church YouTube Channel, enjoy this recording!

**National Grief Awareness Week**

2 to 8 December 2023 marks National Grief Awareness Week. The Cruse Bereavement Support website has information and support, together with specific help if you're coping with grief at Christmas, at what can be a particularly painful time.

[Christmas - Cruse Bereavement Support](#)