

Friends

Malala Day is observed annually on July 12th, Malala Yousafzai's birthday. The date gained international recognition after Malala delivered an historic speech at the United Nations on her 16th birthday in 2013, just months after surviving an attack that nearly took her life – an attack made entirely because she was daring to go to school in a place where it had been declared that girls should not be allowed an education. In that powerful address she declared, "One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world." Since then, the United Nations has declared July 12th to be a global day of recognition of the right to education.

The 12th of July is also International Day of Hope, which sits very happily alongside the Malala story.

For us, these thoughts may bring 1 Corinthians 13:13 to mind: "And now these three remain, faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love." The United Nations website tells us that "the declaration of the International Day of Hope is more than symbolic – it is a global invitation to act. It calls on Member States, regional and international bodies, civil society and individuals to cultivate environments where hope can thrive." The International Day of Hope website tells us that "Hope is measurable and teachable; it helps protect against depression, addiction and violence; it builds resilience, wellbeing and positive change. Hope is a public health priority."

I would argue that we could replace the word "hope" in the above with faith or love and still make complete sense. We need hope to get us through the difficult days, but also because hope is about having something to look forward to, and that makes even the good days better. We need love, the biblical understanding of love which is a determination to be loving come what may; and goodness knows, we need faith which is after all at its root a form of hope as the confident, patient expectation of God's promises for things that are not yet seen. As Hebrews 11:1 says, "Faith is the confidence of what we hope for and the assurance of things not yet seen." May you have a loving, faith-filled and hopeful week.

God bless, Vicci