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September 22, 2021

### **"Life loves on"**

*"For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8: 38 - 39*

Everyone of an age to remember, knows where they were, Sept 11, 2001.

When the planes hit the towers, I was at Strathroy Collegiate. Twelve hundred students and staff were variously affected, some because they had friends or relatives in New York, some because they were especially sensitive, some because they were just young. Scores skipped class; truancy is a Vice-Principal's nightmare. On this day, we put televisions in the hallway. For being out of class, no one was going to be penalized. Teachers went easy with lessons. Guidance Counsellors were available to listen. Many were glued to screens.

On this twentieth anniversary, the Atlantic, an American newsmagazine, founded in 1857, to encourage, among other things, the abolition of slavery, printed an expose about the McIlvanie family, who lost a son on that fateful day. Twenty-six-year-old Bobby worked for Merrill-Lynch. He was about to ask Jenn to marry him, had already asked Jenn's father for permission, and had obtained the ring. His wallet was found; and as much of him as one would expect in such an explosion. The Atlantic article followed the McIlvanies for the intervening twenty years.

News magazines make their mark, not for the cheesy stories of Robinson Crusoe-like rebuilding after catastrophe, but for the threads of humanity that tie us together when the insane happens. The McIlvanies struggled with those threads. Father woke up each morning convinced the whole thing was a conspiracy perpetrated by the government to cover up an FBI investigation into the misappropriation of Japanese gold after the Second World War; twenty years later he continues to preach that theory. Mother joined a self-help group; she's still a member. A younger son wanted to honour his older brother through a successful life as a teacher. Jenn, the heartbroken about-to-be fiancé, was much maligned for keeping Bobby's diary. Although she now has a good life and family, she wonders if the reason she gets angry for no good reason stems from losing Bobby.

In one of Bobby's diary entries was the phrase "Life loves on". It may really have been "Life lives on"; Bobby's hand writing was open to question. But "Life loves on" is a phrase that made a difference to the McIlvanies. It's one of those threads that hold us together when everything else is pulling us apart.

Until next time.

Much love and be safe.

Peter

PS: The whole article is available at "Jennifer Senior, Atlantic Magazine – Grief and Conspiracy 20 Years After 9/11, What Bobby McIlvanie Left Behind".

*"Our relationship with God and each other strengthens us, and helps make the world a better place.  
We welcome and include **everyone** into congregational life."*