

## “LIFE THROUGH THE LENS”



### THE EYES HAVE IT

“Eyes are the windows of the soul” These words, in varying ways, have been around for a long time; Some scholars claim they come from a bloke called Cicero (106-43 BC). These words may be that old, but I doubt they have ever been more relevant than today.

In these days of face masks, one of the common complaints heard is, “when they wear a mask, I can’t see if they are smiling.”

Dr Paul Ekman, a professor emeritus of UC San Francisco who helped develop the Facial Action Coding System to help scientists distinguish between genuine and fake smiles.

“If it’s a very large smile and the lip corners are pulled up intensely then all of those signs will be produced by either a genuine or a non-genuine smile,” says Ekman, author of numerous books about facial expressions and how they reflect our emotions.

“The only place that will reveal the difference in a broad intense smile is the skin between the eyebrows and the upper eyelid. That will move slightly down in the genuine smile and will not move in the social or false smile. Everybody can voluntarily make their lips smile, but very few people can contract the muscle that surrounds the eyes.”

Jesus said, “In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16) In today’s climate of increasing hurt and loneliness and being apart, a “shining light” of “good works” could just be a smile from behind a mask shining through the eyes to the eyes of another.

Another common complaint about mask-wearing, especially among the elderly, is, “It is so hard to hear what the other is saying!” This complaint led me to think, “I wonder, is there a Patron Saint related to hearing or deafness?” Surprise! There is. A St. Francis de Sales “developed a sign language in order to teach a deaf man about God. Because of this, he is the patron saint of the deaf. This man cared so much for the well being of another he went to the trouble

Suppose we make an effort to speak louder, more clearly, who knows what our ears will receive back. After all, didn’t Jesus say, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’<sup>1</sup>This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ (Matthew 22:37-39)

Maybe it is time to stop, take a look around and consider the blessings we have compared to other generations who faced pandemics. Even if you are not a follower of Jesus Christ, give thanks for the effort, love and self-sacrifice of all in our community who work to keep us as safe as possible. Show our gratitude with our lips and eyes, even if it all comes from behind a mask. Imagine the difference it might make to your life in 2022.

God bless you in 2022

Kevin.