

BBC RADIO ULSTER

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Friday 20th December 2013

67 years ago today on 20th December 1946 one of the most popular and heart warming films ever made was released.

Despite initially performing poorly at the box office by the 1970s the film had become a staple of Christmas television around the world and has now come to be regarded as a classic. In fact in 2011 it was voted the UK's favourite Christmas movie.

Have you guessed which film I'm referring to?

Yes, it's the Frank Capra film "It's A Wonderful Life" starring James Stewart as George Bailey – the man who wishes he had never been born.

The black and white weepie tells the story of George, a small-town man who always wanted to leave his home town to see the world, but circumstances and his own good heart led him to stay.

As his life appears to be unravelling before him he ends up preparing to jump from a bridge, when his guardian angel intercedes. The angel shows George Bailey what would have happened to the residents of his hometown if he had never been born.

When George gets to see this alternative reality where his town, his friends and family are much worse off without him he finally realizes that he truly does have a wonderful life.

I love this movie. Just talking about it makes me feel good.

The message of 'It's a Wonderful Life' is universal.

Each of us is special.

We really do matter to the people around us.

We don't all have to achieve things of huge significance.

But the world would be a lesser place without us.

Every person with a good heart can make a difference in the world.

Even at times when my life seems desperate and my heart is broken, there is hope for the future.

The letter to the Romans says 'We continue to shout our praise even when we're hemmed in with troubles, because we know how troubles can develop passionate patience in us, and how that patience in turn forges the tempered steel of virtue, keeping us alert for whatever God will do next.'

The story of George Bailey shows how one person's integrity and selflessness can influence an entire community of people without you even knowing it.

So if you ever find yourself having a George Bailey moment, consider all the ways that your life has deeply impacted on those around you.

Have a very Happy Christmas and thank God for a wonderful life.