I wonder how the choristers are feeling about the referendum result? Or even the choral clerks?

According to the polls, more than 75% of 18-24 young people voted to stay in the EU. It seems that those who will have to live longest with the result are those who did not get the result they voted for.

It’s been a tough few days – a tough few months – for many people, as debate has given way to people shouting from one side or another across the barricades.

But what of the younger generation, especially – has it drawn you into realising how important it is to engage in the political process? Even for an older person like me, I woke up on Friday morning, heard the result, and decided – clearly a little too late – that I really should join the party I have now been voting for for many years, and make my voice heard.

In the readings today, we heard the stories of two young or relatively young people, taking the future into their own hands, in response to where they believed God was directing them.

The story of Jacob and Esau is extraordinary. It was immortalised for many of us in the spoof sermon from Alan Bennett on the chosen text, “Jacob was a smooth man, but Esau was an hairy man.” That was played during a silent meal in the Durham diocese silent ordination retreat, reducing many of us to helpless snuffling laughter as we sipped our soup. Today, the accidental divisions between one person who happens to look one way, and another who is different seem not to amusing when our society seems to be threatened with fracture – or, rather, the fractures which exist have been revealed.

But the point I want you to reflect on for a moment is the way that Jacob takes the initiative – admittedly in a way that seems incredible to us, and admittedly urged on by his mother. Yet he knows that God has promised blessing to him, and he is not going to sit idly by and wait to see what happens. You who are younger here this afternoon will yourselves be leaders in this city, and in this country, in due course. You know what it means to put in hard work to achieve something – or you would not be part of this Cathedral choir. Jacob laboured away for many years, in the face of great struggle and real opposition – and he had, in the end to face his brother Esau and achieve the Reconciliation which was necessary for the story of God’s people to go forward.

However you feel about the Referendum, no one can steal your future if you take responsibility for it yourselves, especially if you do so in response to God. What is God calling you to be, and to do – and to make this world?

The second story today is also about someone who seemed to be determined to do something new, something extraordinary, something that set him apart from those in his home town. Yet when the people in the synagogue heard Jesus, and his new message of God’s love for all people, they were affronted and astonished, and wanted to know where he had got all these mad ideas from. Jesus was amazed, we are told – which is a surprising thing to read, because surely he could have expected it, knowing all things?

I have been proud to become part of this City of Peace and Reconciliation, but I’m just a little bewildered but a majority vote to Leave in this city of all cities. You are from here – and maybe you need to start something different? If it wasn’t easy for Jesus, it may not be easy for you. But neither Jacob, nor Jesus, was ready to give up: neither should you be. You can shape a new world – and those of us who are older should encourage you to do so.