



Easter Letter April 2020

Dear Sisters,



I write to bring you greetings and encouragement in this Holy Week that is so unlike any other.

I wonder how you are coping with this period of social isolation. I would imagine there is a whole mixture of responses: some will be making the most of extra time in which to be creative, write letters and emails or tidy and clean the home; others will already be exhausted, working in stressful situations in hospitals, care homes, food production, stores or other essential occupations. Most of us will be having moments when we feel afraid. Those of you who live alone may well feel particularly frightened and isolated. How grateful we are for those who are on 'the front line' in this war against COVID-19.

Each Thursday evening in the UK people open their doors and windows and start clapping, cheering or banging pan lids or anything else that will fill the quiet night air with sound. They are doing this to show their appreciation of those who are putting their lives at risk for the sake of others. We are told that in the UK, the COVID-19 outbreak will probably reach its height around Easter Weekend. New hospitals are being built to cater for the thousands of patients that are expected. Recently-retired medical staff are returning to work to support their colleagues. All are aware of the dangers.

On Palm Sunday, we recalled how Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey, on his way to die. He was willing to sacrifice his life for the sake of others who were separated from God through sin or simply unaware of their need of God's forgiveness. The people stood by the side of the road and cheered and waved palm branches to show their appreciation shouting, 'Hosanna to the Son of David'. Yet less than a week later, they were shouting for Barabbas, a robber, to be freed and for Jesus to be crucified.

I feel certain that through this ghastly experience of the COVID -19 pandemic, God is going to teach us many truths about what is important and what is not. Here are two possible truths for starters:

God is teaching us the value and the vulnerability of each individual regardless of wealth, status or educational ability. For example, we now realise that those who clean our hospitals or collect our refuse are essential workers. And princes and political leaders as well as children and refugees can catch the corona virus. How will our pay structures reflect our values in the future? How will we reward our essential workers? How far will we go to protect those who are vulnerable to abuse?

As church buildings are closed, many worship services and resources are now available online and Christians are finding new ways of reaching out to those in need. The gospel message is being proclaimed through word and action. The truth about Jesus and his death and resurrection could be proclaimed louder and wider this year than ever before. The horror of Good Friday led to the victory of Easter Sunday. The horror of COVID-19 will also be defeated. Jesus, who was willing to die for you and me, now sits at God's right hand to intercede for us in resurrection glory. In truth, through trusting in Jesus, we have nothing to fear. Thanks be to God for Jesus! Hosanna! Hallelujah!

I pray that each one of us will find comfort in the truth of Christ's victorious resurrection and inner strength as we trust in Him. Be a blessing to someone this week. Alison