

Saturday 16th May



### Nothing can separate us...

*No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.  
For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,  
neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth,  
nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us  
from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

[Romans 8: 37–39]

I have a love/hate relationship with Paul. Sometimes I find his words deeply comforting or inspiring. At other times I am completely bamboozled as to what he is trying to say to us! One passage that many people will know of Paul is the passage from 1 Corinthians 13, those beautiful words about love that are often used at weddings. Another passage is the one above from Romans 8.

This is a passage I have used a couple of times at funerals for very young people. One such funeral took place in the early days of lockdown, in a graveyard, with family and friends spread apart to keep social distancing. The passage struck me more powerfully that time: we were there to celebrate the life of a young man who had tragically died, but we couldn't be close together due to social distancing rules, and couldn't give hugs of support for the family so desperately grieving.

We were apart in as many ways as possible – yet we were together, united in grief. Although we couldn't cross the divides between us, God was in every gap in that graveyard, filling it: nothing separates us from God. God is with us in the isolation, because even if we can't be together, absolutely nothing separates us from God.

*God who is always there  
In darkness and light,  
In fear and hope,  
In solitude and community:  
We thank you that you are always with us.  
We thank you that  
Even when we cannot be together,  
You can be with us;  
Nothing can separate us from you.  
Help us to know your love,  
Your peace,  
Your hope.  
Amen*