



St Leonard's Church
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Anglican Parish of Denmark-Walpole

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We endeavour to be an expression of God's love in the community

Thursday, 23 April 2020

Dear Parishioners,

Much, it seems, happens in a week!

But, before I get into that, I trust that you are all keeping well and are not too frustrated by the strictures of our current times. It is good news that numbers of newly infected in the State have been minimal this week and that numbers of those with the virus are falling. Please, God, may this continue.

I had meant to include with last week's letter, Easter greetings from Bishop Ian. He sent me a card which he had written to those parishes who do not have access to email, so I could pass on his greetings to those of you in the same situation.

In his message, writes:

The Good Friday message is that God loves us so much that he sent his Only Son to die for all of us. What makes Easter so amazing and so special, Christians believe, is that Jesus rose from the dead confirming he is indeed the Son of God and that nothing can separate us from God's love.

He closed by sharing again, the prayer which was on the Melbourne Diocesan website, which I shared with you at the start of this journey and which I hope you continue to use:

Lord Jesus Christ, healer and friend, come and care for all of us
through the danger and uncertainty of the coronavirus epidemic.
To people who are sick, bring healing.
To people who are displaced, isolated, or cut off from family, friends or work,
bring comfort and companionship.
Work with medical staff as they care for the sick and protect them from harm.
Give skill and fruitful research to scientists as they search for treatments, prevention and a cure.
To public health authorities, give wisdom to decide the best ways to manage
both this crisis and our anxieties.
When communities are fearful, give a calm spirit, and kindness to neighbours and strangers.
Through this testing time, and through all the risks we face together,
teach us once again how we can love one another as you have loved us. Amen.

**FOR
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My prayers go out to those locals who were on the *Greg Mortimer* cruise ship off South America, who were infected by the virus. I pray for their recovery and healing.

Some sad news which has come across my desk this week:

Firstly, many of you will know, or know of Chris Coleman, a deacon in the Catholic church here in Denmark, someone who, I understand, used to play Father Christmas, in the community. He has been fighting cancer for some time. Sadly, he died recently.

Another sad death is that of regular visitor to Denmark, Bishop Brian Kyme. Bishop Brian died last week, as a result of cancer. He was surrounded by members of his family. Prayers have been asked for his wife, Doreen, and for his family; Hilary and Jeremy, Stephen and Suzie, and grandchildren Eliza, Fraser, Julia, Rolly and Gus. *May he rest in peace and rise in glory.* A service in Perth to celebrate his life will be held at an appropriate time.

Amongst all the casualties of our current times, is that the *Messenger* will no longer print 'hard copies' of the magazine. For those who do have access to the internet, we will be including a 'sign up' sheet to continue receiving the magazine. For those who wish to receive a paper copy of this, please let Sally Prickett know, and we can print the *Messenger* off for you each month.

Some more positive news is that Sally Prickett has been able to negotiate with *Blossoms Nursery* to sell the delicious jams and preserves which used to sell through the Mustard Seed. I have already managed to avail myself of the service, having run out of her delicious marmalade!

Yesterday, April 22nd, was Earth Day. John Philip Newell wrote this lovely prayer:

For the sacred earth
its scents and sounds and sights
we give you thanks, O God.
For the holy heavens
their heights and depths and breath
we give you thanks.
May we love the earth
and cherish her fecundity.
May we love the rivers
and obey their ancient purity.
May we love the skies
and honour their infinity
all for one another.

While life is different for some of us, for others it continues on much as before, but I ponder what things will be like when this is over. Will we have learnt valuable lessons about compassion, communication, the importance of community and the benefits of living a simpler life ... or will the world go back to its mad scramble of greed and the almighty dollar? Yes, I'm an idealist, and I hope and pray for a better world, but I guess I will just have to 'possess my soul in patience' and wait like everyone else!

I would like to close with a quote from Indian author and activist, Arundhati Roy:

What is this thing that has happened to us? It's a virus, yes. In and of itself it holds no moral brief. But it is definitely more than a virus ... It has made the mighty kneel and brought the world to a halt like nothing else could. Our minds are still racing back and forth, longing for a return to 'normality', trying to stitch our future to our past and refusing to acknowledge the rupture. But the rupture exists. And in the midst of this terrible despair, it offers us a chance to rethink the doomsday machine we have built for ourselves. Nothing could be worse than a return to normality. Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew. This one is no different. It is a portal, a gateway between one world and the next. We can choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our data banks and dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind us. Or we can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world. And ready to fight for it.

Stay safe and keep well. With my prayers and good wishes, your priest and your friend.

