

Dear all

Following on from a question during a phone call, I have just looked at the statistics for the recent online services. The 2 YouTube services for Palm Sunday and Easter Sunrise received 58 and 60 views respectively. I very much doubt that 60 people would have been able to make the Sunrise service in person, so it was lovely that a positive by-product of the lockdown was that more people were able to participate. The statistics for the live streamed Easter Day service are more complex. There were 32 live views – which could mean more is couples were viewing together. However, the reach was 175, 775 post clicks, 35 reactions, 810 engagements, and 539 views – whatever that all means.

I can assure you, however, that becoming a media superstar will not make any difference to my lifestyle!!!???? Hmmm!

Don't forget to tune into the church Facebook page on Sunday at 10.00am for our next Live-streamed service.

Another learning curve has recently been in barbering. How difficult can it be, I thought, when Benedict has some hair grooming clippers? Surely all you need to do is set them for the right length, and get on with it – smooth all-over even length, no problem... I have a new-found respect for the skill of hairdressers and barbers!

One of the more positive aspects of the lockdown is that we are beginning to really appreciate the work and skills of people that we might previously have taken for granted, or considered 'unskilled'. (Though how anyone could have considered, for example, care home workers as 'unskilled' beggars belief – 'low-paid' yes, often under-valued, but never 'unskilled'). I wonder how long before this is forgotten after we return back to 'normal'. Perhaps we need to redefine what 'normal' should be.

A recent email I received was signed off by one "Who didn't realise she was elderly until the government told her so... An ostrich?"

I think quite a few people were shocked, and, in some cases, felt insulted that they were considered 'elderly' or 'vulnerable'. I have certainly learnt over my years of ministry that those people who may be considered 'elderly' by society are often the bedrock of our church community. The challenge is to celebrate this, not to write people off by virtue of age alone, while, at the same time, not to burden them with excessive and unrealistic expectations. This period of lockdown has forced us to reconsider many of the attitudes we have held, and practices that we have developed. I wonder what the post-virus church will look like!

Further on the sewing of scrubs etc. Jan Fisk adds 'For the love of scrubs' is the organisation that I and my daughter in law have been sewing for that Penny mentioned. There is a drop off point here in Frognall where the made items are collected and then distributed to the hospitals where needed.

For anyone looking for Christian resources for families to share and work through together, I would highly recommend The Reflectionary, by Mother Clanger (aka Fay).

<https://reflectionary.org/>

Following on from Zadok the Priest, Terry Noble has suggested this offering – a Trappist monk performance of the Halleluiah Chorus:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pRhjWdr-LAA>

What Do You Need? A Reflection for the Thursday of Easter Week 2020 from Dr Paula Gooder, Biblical Scholar and Chancellor of St Paul's Cathedral

You may like to read John 20.24-29 before you begin.

Everyone has their own favourite Easter story about encounters with the risen Christ. While it is very hard to choose between them, if I had to I would probably choose the story of Thomas. Thomas is so immediate and passionate and, maybe, a little crass – suggesting that you'd like to put your hand in the gaping wound in someone's side lacks delicacy, to put it mildly. But Jesus understood him. He understood not only who Thomas was but also what he needed at that moment to help him believe.

While we might want to say 'ewww' to Thomas' request to stick his fingers into Jesus' wounds, Jesus didn't. He even invited him to do so when they met. The story doesn't tell us whether Thomas actually did – though it implies that he didn't. The whole point of the story is that Jesus was prepared to offer Thomas what he needed to help him respond, no matter how ludicrous it might seem.

The risen Christ still meets us as he did with Thomas. And asks, in this moment, at this difficult time what is it that you need? We shouldn't worry about how absurd our response may sound – it seems that Jesus didn't.

Stay safe

Blessings and love

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