

Catholic Parish of Lindfield-Killara

Diocese of Broken Bay

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

29 – 3 – 20

This week: Ez 37:12-14; Rom 8:8-11; Jn 11:1-45

Next week is Palm Sunday: Isaiah 50:4-7; Philippians 2:6-11; Matt. 26: 14—27:66



‘Unbind him, let him go free.’

When Jesus raises Lazarus these are his words to the bystanders: ‘unbind him’.

To be an Easter people,
to be disciples of the Jesus who was out of step with the legalistic Pharisees,
to be people filled with the Holy Spirit

is to be people who have been unbound:

in other words people who are not tied up with the bonds of petty regulations and a faith that is all about legalism.

Jesus reminded his listeners that faith is first and foremost a matter of *the heart*,
a *relationship* with a God who is a loving and compassionate Father,
a way of life that is meant to set us free, not to bind and enslave us.

Fr Colin

Food for the Soul ...

When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who had come with her, weeping, he became perturbed and deeply troubled, and he said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Sir, come and see.” And Jesus wept. (

Jn 11:33-35

THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING AND EVIL

How can there be an all-loving and an all-powerful God if there is so much suffering and evil in our world? Perhaps that is the most difficult religious question of all time. Why does God not act in the face of suffering? Why do bad things happen with seemingly no response from God? In a famous book, *After Auschwitz*, Richard Rubenstein asks how it is even possible for a Jew to believe in God after the holocaust. How can we believe in God in the face of God’s seeming inaction in the face of suffering & evil?

There have been countless attempts to answer this question, not least inside the tortured experience of those who are suffering. There have also been many attempts at offering some kind of acceptable theoretical explanation.

For example, Harold Kushner (*When Bad Things Happen to Good People*), writing as a Jewish rabbi, tries to answer the question by defending God’s love and goodness at the expense of his power. Essentially, God would help us if he could, Kushner believes, but God isn’t all-powerful. Innocent suffering exists not because God cannot stop it.

Peter Kreeft, CS Lewis, & Teilhard de Chardin, among others, have written insightful books on this question from inside Christian theology. Christians believe that what is ultimately at stake is human freedom & God’s respect for it. God gives us freedom & (unlike most everyone else) refuses to violate it, even when it would seem beneficial to do so.

That leaves us in a lot of pain at times, but, as Jesus reveals, God is not so much a rescuing God as a redeeming one. God does not protect us from pain, but instead enters it and ultimately redeems it. That might sound simplistic in the

face of real death and evil, but it is not. We see a powerful illustration of this in Jesus’ reaction to the death of Lazarus. In essence, this is how the Gospels tell that story:

The sisters of Lazarus, Martha and Mary, send word to Jesus telling him that “the man you love” is gravely ill. Curiously though, Jesus does not immediately rush off to see Lazarus. Instead he stays where he is for two more days, until Lazarus is dead, and then sets off to see him. When he arrives near the house, he is met by Martha who says to him: “If you had been here, my brother would not have died!” Basically her question is: “Where were you? Why didn’t you come and heal him?” Jesus does not answer her question but instead assures her that Lazarus will live in some deeper way.

Martha then goes and calls her sister, Mary. When Mary arrives she repeats the identical words to Jesus that Martha had spoken: “If you had been here my brother would not have died!” However, coming out of Mary’s mouth, these words mean something else, something deeper.

Mary is asking the universal, timeless question about suffering and God’s seeming absence. Her query (“Where were you when my brother died?”) asks that question for everyone: Where is God when innocent people suffer? Where was God during the holocaust? Where is God when anyone’s brother dies?

Curiously, Jesus does not engage the question, at least in theory; instead he becomes distressed and asks: “Where have you put him?” And when they offer to show him, he begins to weep. His answer to suffering: he enters into peoples’ helplessness and pain. Afterwards, he raises Lazarus from the dead.

And what we see here will occur in the same way between Jesus and his Father. The Father does not save Jesus from death on the cross even when he is jeered and mocked *there*. Instead the Father allows him to die on the cross and then raises him up afterwards. (*continued on p.3*)



‘I have carved you on the palms of my hands....’²

Isaiah 49:16

27th March 2020

Dear sisters and brothers in our parish community,

Well, another week has passed in these extraordinary times, bringing with it new changes to how we live our lives. Our challenge as disciples is to be able to seek the hidden grace amidst what seems like only anxiety and disruption—for ways that we can make these new circumstances opportunities for growth in ourselves, in our families, in our church community. Perhaps unexpected grace and growth can come when life is not ‘business as usual’.

This is a time though of great challenge, bringing great anxiety to us all. And of course as public health measures are put in place so many are suffering loss of income and/or employment. Please hold those suffering in this particular way in your prayers in a special way. Let’s be prepared to reach out in ways that we can.

As a Christian community, at this time it’s good to remember a message coming from the Diocese of Geraldton:

“Churches are not being closed. Buildings are being closed. You are the Church! You are to remain open.”

We are blessed to have a beautiful parish community which we are called to ‘keep open’. Please continue to visit the special page of our parish website (go to www.lindfieldkillara.org.au and click on the special hotlink box on the homepage entitled ‘Parish Life In the Current Situation’, or just use the direct link: <https://www.bbcatholic.org.au/lindfield-killara/news-events/parish-life-in-the-current-situation>), which is continually evolving, and through which we’re trying to provide you with as many resources for your on-going life of discipleship as possible. Amongst the resources there you will find:

- ◇ links to Mass being celebrated on Sundays in our parish
- ◇ links to Mass being celebrated on weekdays in our parish
(we’re aware that the sound quality wasn’t too good in our earlier attempts but we’ve improved it enormously. The best thing however would be for the sound to come not from the church speakers but from a Bluetooth headset. However since our income has collapsed we can afford no extraordinary expenditure—but if you would be able to cover the cost of this technology (~\$220-250) please let the Parish Office or me know.
- ◇ a step by step text for a home celebration of the Sunday liturgy which can be celebrated individually or as a household. This pdf document (updated weekly) also contains the texts of the Scripture readings for each Sunday which can also help if you’re following the online Mass. You could set aside a special time on Sunday, prepare a sacred space, and prayerfully enter into this liturgy, or view the online video of the liturgy, or a combination of both. Please keep Sunday sacred.
- ◇ resources for prayer
- ◇ resources for the children, especially for Sundays; along with guides for parents.
- ◇ the Sunday homily
- ◇ ways that we can help you to help others, to be a supporting community
- ◇ a Stop Press section containing new information relating to our life as disciples, coming from either the government, Bishop Anthony, or the Vatican itself. The current links include information relating to weddings and funerals, and preliminary indications as to the form the Easter celebrations will take –though Bishop Anthony will offer more detailed directions soon).
- ◇ and much much more. Please visit the page often—it’s our way of remaining connected and strengthened as a parish community at this time.

I hate to have to raise this again but bills have to be paid, our property maintained, our staff paid, Fr Thomas and I fed and housed (!) - and yet of course our weekly income has been devastated since we have no public Masses. (On top of that, the second major component of our income comes from rental of our parish facilities—as of this week all our rental activities have had to be discontinued and so our rental income will also be reduced to zero: another huge dent to our revenue). I know that you yourself may be in a situation of financial constraint, but if it is possible for you to continue contributing, though now in an online way, you’ll find information on two ways to do that on page 5 of this bulletin and also on the special page of our website referred to above. Please help!

In these challenging times let’s keep our focus on God dwelling in our hearts as the rock and foundation of our lives, whose grace and mercy is given to us in Jesus by the grace of the Holy Spirit; *and* on our human community who must not become for us merely a possible source of contagion. As our Vicar General, Fr David Ranson, has said, we shouldn’t use the term ‘social distancing’ but rather ‘physical distancing’. We need our human connections more than ever. Pick up the phone, skype, video call on Whatsapp, whatever. Make time for online morning coffee, even online meals with friends. Contact those who may be living alone, or finding it hard. Buildings are closed. The Church isn’t. We are the Church. Our call is to be vessels of God’s grace and love to others.

With the assurance of Fr Thomas’ and my prayers.

Fr Colin



TAWONGA, MALAWI

PROJECT COMPASSION

GO FURTHER TOGETHER

WEEK 5: MALAWI
5TH SUNDAY OF LENT 29 MARCH 2020

Tawonga is a ten-year-old girl, living with a disability. She lives in a village in northern Malawi in a region plagued by food insecurity and poverty. For most of her life, her parents have struggled to put meals on the table. Tawonga often had to miss school because she was too sick from hunger. The family also faced discrimination in their community due to her disability. Since participating in a Caritas Australia supported program, Tawonga's life has transformed. Her family now grows enough food to provide three meals a day, ending the struggle of malnutrition, and helping her thrive at school. Tawonga, whose name means 'thank you', says her community is blessed with many resources, like rivers, fertile soil and hills. However, with dry spells followed by floods, armyworm infestations and crop failures, her parents struggled to make a living. In 2016, Tawonga's parents heard about the A+ program run by Caritas Australia's partner, CADECOM (Catholic Development Commission in Malawi). They learnt irrigation farming and were given fertiliser and high-yield seeds. With these new techniques, their production of crops almost tripled. With your help, this transformational program can continue to empower vulnerable women, men and children, and strengthen the communities around them. Let's Go Further, Together.

PLEASE SUPPORT THOSE MOST IN NEED IN THE WORLD:

Let's not forget the great work of Caritas, whose principal source of funds is the annual Lenten Project Compassion Appeal. Like our own parish funds Project Compassion will suffer because no public Masses can be held.

Donations can still be made either by posting them to Caritas or by using their online donation facilities:

Online: www.caritas.org.au

Postal donations: GPO Box 9830 Sydney 2001

By Phone: 1800 024 413

(continued from page 1...)

The lesson in these deaths and raisings might be put this way: the God we believe in doesn't necessarily intervene and rescue us from suffering and death (although we are invited to pray for that). Instead he redeems our suffering afterwards.

God's seeming indifference to suffering is not so much a mystery—one that leaves the mind befuddled as a mystery which makes sense only if you give yourself over in a certain level of trust. Forgiveness and faith work the same.

You have to roll the dice in trust. Nothing else can give you an answer.

And I do not say this glibly. I know too many people who have been hurt, brutally and unfairly, in ways that make it difficult for them to accept that there is an all-powerful God who cares.

But sometimes the only answer to the question of suffering and evil is the one Jesus gave to Mary and Martha—shared helplessness, shared distress, and shared tears, with no attempt to try to explain God's seeming absence, but rather a trusting that, because God is all-loving and all-powerful, in the end all shall be well and our pain will someday be redeemed in God's embrace.

Catholic Parish of Lindfield -Killara

Holy Family Church

corner Pacific Hwy & Highfield Rd, Lindfield

Immaculate Heart of Mary Church

corner Fiddens Wharf Rd & Charles St, Killara

Fr Colin Blayney, Parish Priest

colin@lindfieldkillara.org.au 9416 7195

Fr Thomas Alackakunnel VC, Asst Priest

thomas@lindfieldkillara.org.au; 0421 406162

Parish Office

Parish Office Hours: 9.30 am -4pm

Address: Lvl 1, 2 Highfield Road (cnr Pacific Hwy)
Lindfield NSW 2070

Postal address: PO Box 22, Lindfield NSW 2070

Phone: 9416 3702

Email: parish@lindfieldkillara.org.au

Parish Website: www.lindfieldkillara.org.au

Parish Staff

Parish Secretary:

Philita Marundan

philita@lindfieldkillara.org.au

Parish Office Coordinator

Child Protection Coordinator:

Alison Williams (M,W,Th only)

alison@lindfieldkillara.org.au

Sacramental Programme Team:

Maia Schulze

Tsangsacramental@lindfieldkillara.org.au

Parish Facilities' Coordinator (volunteer) :

Anthony Cassidy: anthony@lindfieldkillara.org.au

Youth Ministry Coordinator (volunteer)

Jean Shatek: youth@lindfieldkillara.org.au

Parish School

Holy Family School: 4 Highfield Rd, Lindfield 2070

Principal: Mr Lou Dogao Phone: 9416 7200

Email: info@holyfamily.nsw.edu.au

School Website: www.hfldbb.catholic.edu.au

*Lord, in Jesus your Son, you restored to us
the gift of everlasting life. Grant that life to:*

Recently deceased: John Cashman, Julie Wright,
Maria Ciong KN, Joyce Murphy, Eleanor Villenor
Quema, Stephen Hunyor.

PLEASE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK:

Nicholas Sutherland, Jesse Langford, Anthony
Ellison, Ron Burke, Nena Umali, Wolfgang Liers,
Cyril Ferriere, Alex Noble, William Wise, Lise
Therese Ferriere, Ian Coffey, Maureen Hobbs,
Russell Adams.

Fr Ron Rolheiser omi (from the Centre for Liturgy,

SUPPORTING OTHERS IN THESE CHALLENGING TIMES



As disciples our challenge is to keep our eyes fixed outwards, and not to close in on ourselves at this time.

Here are some ways that we could offer practical support to others:

I. SHOPPING

Could you do the shopping for a person who is housebound by reason of age or infirmity, or who needs to self-isolate and doesn't have local family? The Parish Office would be happy to liaise this and to facilitate the payment system. The shopping can simply be left at the person's front door.

Or, if you yourself are housebound or in a situation where you need to self-isolate—do you need someone who would do your shopping?

Also, while those who are elderly are still able to order shopping online, not all are at ease with the use of computers. The Parish office can do the ordering for you.

In any of these cases please contact Alison in the Parish Office (alison@lindfieldkillara.org.au; or 94163702 during office hours) and she will help to arrange this.

2.SOMEONE TO TALK TO

Could you chat on the phone with a person who is housebound by reason of age or infirmity, or who needs to self-isolate, and doesn't have local family?

Or, if you yourself are housebound or in a situation where you need to self-isolate—do you need someone who would phone for a chat from time to time?

In either case please contact Alison in the Parish Office (alison@lindfieldkillara.org.au; or 94163702 during office hours) and she will help to arrange this.

3.SOMEONE TO PRAY WITH

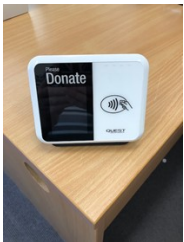
Likewise if you would like someone to pray with over the phone, or if you'd be willing to do this with someone who requests it please contact Alison.

4.ANYTHING ELSE?

If you can think of any other ways the our parish can help link up people who need help and those willing to offer it please let us know.

TAP AND GO will be accessible again.

Following advice we've been given, this week we will fix the two machines against the glass wall of 'The Basement' at the rear of and underneath Lindfield church. Tap donations to both collections can be made at any time, night or day, by tapping against the glass. They will be in place by Tuesday.



Some notices:

- ◆ The bulletin of course is now largely an e-edition, available on the parish website by Friday evening prior to each Sunday, and also mailed out to those who want it on the following Tuesday. If you're not on Philita's bulletin e-list and you would like to be please email her at philita@lindfieldkillara.org.au If you know of someone who is isolated and does not have internet access perhaps you could drop them a copy of the bulletin.
- ◆ We will leave a small number of printed copies of the bulletin near one of the doors of both our churches.
- ◆ Please don't forget that there are a number of resources for helping your children celebrate on Sundays and to reflect on the Scripture readings. These can be found in the special section of our parish website 'Parish Life in the Current Situation'.
- ◆ The Parish Office is continuing to operate though only one staff member is there at a time—the rest of the staff are working from home. For public health it's not possible to visit the office so please make contact by phone or email and the staff will assist you.
- ◆ From this Monday we enter the two weeks which lead to Easter and which are known as Passiontide—our Lenten focus turns to the coming commemoration of the Lord's suffering, death—and ultimately his Resurrection. A time of the year which can speak powerfully to us in the current situation in which our world finds itself.

It was a quiet Monday morning in September 2053, when John awoke with a need to go to the bathroom. To John this wasn't just any ordinary day! This was the day he would open the last package of toilet paper his parents bought in the year 2020.

SUPPORTING OUR PARISH FINANCIALLY AT THIS TIME

We face a great challenge at this time as a parish since most of our income comes from the weekly collections which of course are not taking place in the absence of the public celebration of Mass. Our second source of income comes from the rental of parish halls & meeting rooms—this has also ceased. We very much need your support.

There are two ways that you can arrange to contribute to our First and Second Collections electronically (a reminder:

- ◇ the First Collection provides for Frs Colin and Thomas and also provides for the fund which provides for health care for priests, and supports sick and retired clergy
- ◇ the Second Collection provides for all the running costs of the parish and its services)

To contribute electronically:

A. to contribute by direct debit from your bank account our account details are:

First Collection: BSB 062 784 Acct 1116 8002 (Lindfield Killara Parish Pastoral Revenue Account)

Second Collection: BSB 062 784 Acct 1116 8001 (Lindfield Killara Parish Church Account)

B. to arrange for a recurrent charge to your credit card please return the form below to the Parish Office (please email to accounts@lindfieldkillara.org.au)

AUTHORITY FOR RECURRENT PERIODIC PAYMENT BY CREDIT CARD

I wish to use my credit card to make my regular parishioner contributions to the Catholic Parish of Lindfield-Killara (the Merchant).

I hereby authorise the Merchant to debit my Card account with the amount and at the intervals specified below. This authority shall stand, as specified, until I notify the Merchant in writing of its cancellation.

Surname: _____ Given Names: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Cardholder's signature: _____ Date: __/__/

Type of card (please circle): **MASTERCARD** **VISA**

Card Number:

□□□□ □□□□ □□□□ □□□□

Expiry date: □□ / □□

I authorise the following periodic payment(s) to be made:

- | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------------|
| A. FIRST COLLECTION: | Amount: \$ _____ | Each: Month / Quarterly |
| B. SECOND COLLECTION: | Amount: \$ _____ | Each: Month / Quarterly |
| C. CFW COLLECTION: | Amount: \$ _____ | Each: Tri-Annual (Aug, Nov, May) |

If you would prefer to obtain a set of Weekly Envelopes for your Second Collection contribution please complete your name and address details above and tick here

Please return this form to the Parish Office in person or by mail or by email to accounts@lindfieldkillara.org.au

The information provided in this form is collected and handled in accordance with the Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay's Privacy Policy available on the website at www.dbb.org.au

四旬期第五主日 29.3.2020

讀經一（我要把我的神注入你們內，使你們復活。）

恭讀厄則克耳先知書 37:12-14

吾主上主這樣說：「看，我要親自打開你們的墳墓；我的百姓，我要從你們的墳墓中，把你們領出來，引你們進入以色列地域。我的百姓！當我打開你們的墳墓，把你們從墳墓領出來的時候，你們便承認我是上主。我要把我的神注入你們內，使你們復活，叫你們安居在你們的地域；那時，你們便要承認我，上主言出必行——吾主上主的斷語。」——上主的話。（默想片刻）

答唱詠 詠130:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8

【答】：上主富於仁慈；他必定慷慨救援。

（詠130:7）

領：上主，我由深淵向你呼號；我主，求你俯聽我的呼號，求你側耳俯聽我的哀禱！【答】

領：上主，你若細察我的罪辜，我主，有誰還能站立得住？可是，你寬恕為懷，令人對你起敬起愛。【答】

領：我仰賴上主，我靈期待他的聖言；我靈等候我主，切於更夫等待黎明。以色列，請仰賴上主。【答】

領：因為上主富於仁慈；他必定慷慨救援。

他必要拯救以色列人，脫離一切罪根。

【答】

讀經二（使耶穌從死者中復活者的聖神住在你們內。）

恭讀聖保祿宗徒致羅馬人書 8:8-11

弟兄姊妹們：

凡隨從肉性的人，決不能得天主的歡心。至於你們，你們已不屬於肉性，而是屬於聖神，只要天主的聖神，住在你們內。

誰若沒有基督的聖神，誰就不屬於基督。如果基督在你們內，身體固然因罪惡而

死亡，但神魂卻賴正義而生活。再者，如果那使耶穌從死者中復活者的聖神，住在你們內，那麼，那使基督從死者中復活的，也必要藉那住在你們內的聖神，使你們有死的身體復活。——上主的話。（默想片刻）

福音前歡呼

領：基督、天主聖言，願光榮歸於你。

眾：基督、天主聖言，願光榮歸於你。

領：主說：我就是復活，就是生命；信從我的人，必永遠不死。（若11:25,26）

眾：基督、天主聖言，願光榮歸於你。

福音（我就是復活，就是生命。）

恭讀聖若望福音 11:3-7,17,20-27,33-45

那時候，拉匝祿的兩個姊妹，便派人到耶穌那裡，說：「主啊，你所愛的人病了！」耶穌聽了，便說：「這病不至於死，只是為彰顯天主的光榮，並為叫天主子因此受光榮。」

耶穌素來疼愛瑪爾大及她的妹妹和拉匝祿。

當耶穌聽說拉匝祿病了，仍在原地逗留了兩天。此後，耶穌對門徒說：「我們再到猶太去吧！」

耶穌一到了伯達尼，得知拉匝祿在墳墓裡，已經四天了。

瑪爾大一聽說耶穌來了，便去迎接他；瑪利亞仍坐在家裡。瑪爾大對耶穌說：「主！如果你在這裡，我的兄弟決不會死！就是現在，我也知道：你無論向天主求什麼，天主必要賜給你。」

耶穌對瑪爾大說：「你的兄弟必定要復活。」

瑪爾大說：「我知道在末日復活時，他必要復活。」

耶穌對瑪爾大說：「我就是復活，就是生命；信從我的，即使死了，仍要活著；凡活著而信從我的人，必永遠不死。你信麼？」

瑪爾大回答說：「是的，主，我信你是默西亞，天主子，要來到世界上的那一位。」

耶穌心神感傷，難過起來，於是說：「你們把他安放在那裡？」

他們回答說：「主，你來，看吧！」耶穌哭了。於是猶太人說：「看，他多麼愛他啊！」其中有些人說：「他既開了瞎子的眼睛，難道不能使這人不死麼？」

耶穌心中又感傷起來，來到墳墓前。這墳墓是個洞穴，前面有一塊石頭堵著。

耶穌說：「挪開這塊石頭！」

死者的姐姐瑪爾大向耶穌說：「主！已經臭了，因為已經四天了。」

耶穌對瑪爾大說：「我不是告訴過你：如果你信，就會看到天主的光榮嗎？」他們便挪開了石頭。

耶穌舉目向上，說：「父啊！我感謝你，因為你俯聽了我。我本來知道你常常俯聽我，但是，我說這話，是為了四周站立的群眾，好叫他們相信，是你派遣了我。」說完這話，便大聲喊說：「拉匝祿！出來吧！」死者便出來了，腳和手都纏著布條，面上還蒙著汗巾。耶穌向他們說：「解開他，讓他行走吧。」

那些來到瑪利亞那裡的猶太人，一看到耶穌所行的事，就有許多人相信了他。——上主的話。（講道後默想片刻）

華人天主教會 北區中心主日彌撒12時-牧職

修女 司徒金美修女 0419- 426899

中心聯絡 Gloria Cheung ☎0416-118089主

日彌撒12時

JUNIOR WORDSEARCH

Lazarus comes back to life

Jn 11:3-7, 17, 20-27, 31-45

M C E R M A R T H A E H
Q S I S T E R S T O N E
V W E W K N G S I C K A
P S P I P M N V G T O M
D Z C L G C M M B H X F
O X S A P J X I A E R J
C U B Z L D K K U V F V
L V E A W Q M A R Y S G
O Z T R P D F M M J X F
T L H U C R Y L S Y Z G
H J A S W K P F O U T C
A U N B A E W I I J D R
W S Y D T O M B F A C E

Try to find these words:

Bethany
cloth
cry
face
Lazarus
Martha
Mary
out
sick
sister
stone
tomb

(cont'd from p. 8): Church's decision to close all public liturgies, even though rationally I know it is unavoidable. Of course, pastoral work and the hearing of confessions still continue, often discreetly on benches in gardens, letting the fresh air keep us from mutual contagion.

THE JOY OF PREACHING COMES FROM FACES

As members of the Order of Preachers we must find every way we can to proclaim the gospel. Our Dominican students are exploring new ways of reaching out on the web; our university classes will be on-line. Never has there been such a vast effort to reach out with the gospel on the digital continent. Wonderful!

And yet most of the joy of preaching comes from the faces, the smiles and the laughter, of the people one is addressing.

St Augustine says that we should teach with Hilaritas, exuberance and even ecstasy.

It is intensely mutual. When the occasion is blessed, the preacher and the people inspire each other. A fifteenth century Sufi imam, Mullah Nasrudin, said: "I talk all day, but when I see someone's eyes blaze, then I write it down."

So for me this is both a time of intense communion but also of deprivation, of rediscovered friends and of absence, of reaching out but not touching.

All that we lose in this time of plague will, we hope and trust, be recovered before too long. The coronavirus will pass.

SOMETHING GOOD FROM THIS CONTAGION

But something is in the air that may be contagious for the good. I pray that we in Britain may look back to this time as when we recovered some sense of being a single national community.

The Conservative government made an extraordinary announcement: If a company lays off an employee from work, rather than dismissing them, the government will pay 80% of their wages. This is an intervention of the State that is unparalleled in the history of Britain and the cost of which is hard to imagine.

But slowly our politicians are coming to realise that unless such drastic action is taken in favor of the poorest, the people on zero hours contracts, those who earn least, the result might be a social unrest that Europe has not seen since the French Revolution.

A SINGLE HUMAN COMMUNITY FROM WHICH WE CANNOT EXIT

We can only survive as a society by radical change. The vast inequalities of wealth have so weakened our common bonds that extreme financial suffering could provoke social dissolution.

The cry of conservative politicians ever since the financial crisis of 2008 has been 'We are all in this together'. But it was not true.

Maybe at least some of the political elite needs to see that if we are not really all in this together, the consequences will be almost unthinkable. Of course, as unshakeable European, I hope that we may eventually come to see that we cannot flourish without our European friends as well! Brexit could not have happened at a more unfortunate moment.

Let us hope that we shall discover that just as the virus reaches beyond national boundaries and does not need visas, so we shall renew our sense that we belong to a single human community from which no exit is possible.

POST SCRIPTUM: WHAT I HAVE LEARNT

I was at the Tel Aviv airport, returning home from a month with my brethren at the Ecole Biblique of Jerusalem.

The virus had disrupted life of the Ecole; most of the professors had been stranded abroad, unable to return, but I still had a wonderful time reading the latest research on the New Testament.

After almost 50 years of priesthood, and incessant preaching, teaching and writing, I was having a break. It was time for a Sabbath.

But after a month, I was becoming hungry to work again. I had lectures to prepare for the summer in America, France and England.

Now they are all cancelled. There are just a few articles to write about the crisis. Thank you La Croix for asking me!

I have discovered that I am more driven by tasks and goals than I had realized. Now I must learn to live differently, which most people have to at my age of almost 75!

An Australian friend had sent me CDs of his favorite composers. Can I learn just to sit back and listen, even in the middle of the morning?

Will I read a Shakespearean play just because it is wonderful and for the pure pleasure of it?

Can I live in this moment, attending to the people who need me now, and be content even if no one calls?

Can I learn that I do not have to justify my existence and prove to others that my life is worthwhile?

I can just live, day by day.

This Sabbatical time invites me to prepare for the coming Sabbath of the Lord, when we shall rest in his peace.

The twelfth century theologian Peter Abelard evoked this glimpse of the end of the journey:

THERE SABBATH UNTO SABBATH

SUCCEEDS ETERNALLY,

THE JOY THAT HAS NO ENDING

OF SOULS IN HOLIDAY

8

A beautiful reflection on this time in which we find ourselves
by Fr Timothy Radcliffe OP

Queuing up to go through security in Tel Aviv airport last week, I was fascinated by the balletic movements of the man in front of me. He almost danced as he maneuvered his suitcases so that no one could be nearer to him than two metres. He was probably wise, but for me he vividly evoked two aspects of the new world in which we live as best we can. First of all, insecurity. The menace of death hangs in the air, literally. We are vulnerable.

LIVING WELL NOW AND BEING GRATEFUL

When I had cancer three years ago, I was confronted with my own mortality. This is different since it touches all whom we love.

The two people to whom I am closest in my community in Blackfriars are both at high risk. One of them is only fifty. But he already has an illness, which means he has no immunity at all. Both of them are the brothers with whom I have been on holidays every year for many years. Maybe I never will again.

The only way that I can respond is to enjoy them now. Their lives are a gift for which I can give thanks every day. I went and bought a bottle of wine so that I can have a drink with the one who can still share space with me. Gratitude floods my being. We shall have a wonderful evening. But he has just phoned to say we must delay since he is not well.

WE NEED PROXIMITY AND TOUCH, HUGS AND KISSES

The young man with the suitcases also was an image of isolation. Every stranger, and even friend, is seen as a possible threat to one's life, and I to him or her. Safety is found only in keeping apart.

But how can we live in isolation? We need proximity and touch, hugs and kisses, to be really alive.

In the Sistine Chapel, Michelangelo shows God's finger touching Adam into life. We are all the hands of the life-giving God when we touch others with kindness and respect. Touch is the nourishment of our humanity. Grandparents and grandchildren who cannot hug each other are living a deep deprivation!

CYBERSPACE IS NOT THE SAME, BUT...

I am deeply grateful, as never before, for living in a community, so that even in this terrible time, I can leave my room and find brethren. And I live in a beautiful city filled with parks in which I can walk and see the signs of spring. I have no reason to complain.

But millions of people are deprived of the physical closeness that we need to flourish.

On the other hand, cyberspace is filled with messages expressing love and care. 'Are you alright?' 'Have you got back from Israel?' I have received three since I began to write this short piece. Suddenly, when I must not touch, I am in touch with people whom I have not seen for years. Yes, there is isolation, but also a new and wide communion of those who care.

Of course it is not the same. I miss the faces of those whom I love.

CONFESSIONS OF A FIRST-TIME 'SKYPER'

Yesterday for the first time in my life – what a confession! – I used Skype. I contacted a friend who lives abroad to find out how he was. In the evening I skyped the other brother who is isolated from us all. It was better than nothing, but it is not the same as seeing a face three dimensionally.

Usually we do not sit in front of screens staring each other. Faces are best seen in side-glances, unexpected glimpses, caught unawares when one enters a room. We do not stare at the faces of those whom we love, as we focus relentlessly at the screen when we Skype or Zoom. When we are physically together, we look at each other gently, discreetly, from every angle.

The brother whom I first skyped told me that in Hebrew, faces give light. It is as if the light shines forth from our eyes, illuminating those whom we love. We bask in their radiance, like sunbathers on a beach; we rest in their gaze. I miss so many faces at the moment.

FASTING FROM THE SHARED INTIMACY OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

And touch! Yesterday we celebrated the last of our public Eucharists for a while. As we processed out a friend waved. We will be fasting from the shared intimacy of the Body of Christ.

The early Christians shocked the pagans by the intimacy of our touch in the kiss of peace. It was really a kiss on the mouth! All that stops for the moment.

How can we deprive people of the Eucharist? Interiorly, I rebelled against the

(continued on page 7...)



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