

A Message from Canon Imogen Nay:

How can we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?

Our Judaeo-Christian heritage has plenty to teach us about exile and the longer this experience of exile from our families, friends, workplaces, and Cathedral Church continues, the more do we connect with it spiritually and emotionally.

By the rivers of Babylon-

There we sat down and wept

When we remembered Zion.

On the willows there we hung our harps.

Psalm 137

We have not been taken away to a foreign land by captors, but by a deadly illness, that isolates us, confuses us, and takes away a huge part of what it means to be human – physical contact.

In some ways the Internet only makes this worse, by making us feel like we can still connect, still be with others. I watched a comedy programme last night, with everyone in little boxes on a screen broadcasting from their homes, and it was hopelessly sad to see; the attempt at connection, at comedy, was futile, at least to me. For the laughter and the repartee was absent and strained.

I think it is important to name this experience and recognise how traumatic it is for us – we mustn't pretend that it isn't. Yet, that doesn't mean that we lose faith or hope. The Jewish people, through exile, learned what it meant to truly rely on God: it was in exile that they became themselves, that their corporate identity and religious memory was formed.

When our lives are stripped back and we are living with loss, we might look to God to fill our void. It is in that looking and searching for God that we experience His everlasting mercy and goodness, His loving kindness to us. In our perseverance and in our endurance, we understand more fully the depth, breadth, height and width of the love and wisdom of God – which has more than enough to sustain and nourish us in the night-time of our fear.

May the God of peace and hope, the God of abundant wisdom and strength, fill you today and all days, so that in being full with God you may be empty of sin. Amen

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An update from Gary Fleming – our Ordinand

'So what has that Ordinand been up to?' is probably not a question you have asked yourselves of late. Recent events have left me with a similar question 'what does an Ordinand do when things are as they are'. The answer, in part, came when my daughter, a Student Nurse working with Covid patients, arrived home from work one evening and just said 'Dad, it's really tough'. Reflecting on this theologically I was drawn to Isaiah 58 and thought to myself 'What is the fast that I have chosen?' So after a discussion with my family I decided that evening to volunteer to work with the Broomfield Hospital Chaplains.

The passage from Isaiah focused me on my mission and calling as an Ordinand in formation. Additionally, a long-held admiration for the action of the Rev'd Mychal Fallon Judge, the chaplain for the New York Fire Department during 9/11 provided an example of commitment and sacrifice and how to respond. It really is a story worth reading.

Wind the clock forward one week later and after three days of shadowing I was live on the wards. The Chaplains do amazing things at the hospital. I am reluctant to use the term work because having spent time with them they clearly do not see it as work. It is a calling. The living out of the Gospel and the words of the prophet Isaiah. On the wall they have the words from St Francis of Assisi to guide them, **'Preach the Gospel at all times. If necessary use words'**.

When I first arrived, I felt committed to being where needed. So I agreed to work on the wards and intensive care units with the patients stricken by Coronavirus. Training videos for protective procedures and supervision occupied my period of shadowing along with several pastoral experiences that will stay with me forever. The thing that stood out to me so quickly is that people are dying and suffering without their loved ones around them. It broke my heart. The personal tragedy and loss accompanying this terrible virus extends beyond what we see and hear on the news. The realisation quickly came to me that I needed to ensure that to be there for others I had to make sure that my faith was grounded and plugged in to He who sustains me. So as well as deepening my prayer life I started broadcasting Compline in the evenings to reinforce spiritual discipline. I am grateful for family and friends who have joined me in this, and we have become a small but diverse worship group.

A big part of the support we have provided has been to the staff at the hospital; they have been under such pressure every day, with concerns for their families and colleagues, some of whom they have seen succumb to the virus. My colleagues have been amazingly supportive, and during one very difficult episode took the time to debrief and pray with me. But something that has really stood out to me in all of this is how much every contribution counts: the amazing work of the team at the Cathedral in keeping worship going; the efforts of local business in supporting rough sleepers and the staff at the hospital. But this is not new news to us. The sense of community, love and caring for each other that we have experienced is not something that really should surprise us. We are only realising what we were given by Christ to love each other and to love God. It is as God meant it to be. It is our natural state of being. It's the Gospel. Thank you all for your continued support and God bless during this time. I look forward to being amongst you all again soon.

Family Craft: the wounds of Christ

On Sunday Canon Imogen and family invited us to engage with the story of Doubting Thomas through craft. Thank you to James Tyrrell and his daughter who sent this in.



Pray with Us:

Pray for those who today still risk all to proclaim their faith in an often-hostile world. Remember Arab Christians as they struggle to maintain their freedom to worship

Pray for Christian Aid especially in these difficult times

Pray for the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem & the Middle East & the Most Revd Michael Lewis, Archbishop

Pray for those who are unwell: Ernie Andrews, Jim, Brenda and Chris Cole, Jean Cooper, Teresa Hipgrave, Rita James, Norman Sharpe, Winnie Towers, and all those in need of our prayers



Study with Us:

Study Notes on the Sunday Gospel:

Third Sunday of Easter: 26 April 2020

I Peter 1.17-23

Ps 116.1-8

Luke 24.13-35

Did our hearts not burn within us ...?

Our readings this Sunday are full of the firm faith in the resurrection of Jesus, both in the first letter of Peter and in the witness of the disciples on the road to Emmaus.

In the **First Reading**, Peter reminds us that we have been ransomed by the blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ. Our faith and hope are based in the God who raised Jesus from the dead and gave him glory.

The **Psalm** is a beautiful reflection on God's love and our response – "I am filled with love, for the Lord hears me!"

The **Gospel** gives us the moving story of the two disciples who meet the risen Jesus on the way to Emmaus. They only recognize him in 'the breaking of bread.'

Like the disciples, may we find the Lord this week in whatever difficult circumstances we experience.

Daily Gospel Readings for this week, to use in your daily prayer:

Monday 27th: John 6. 22-29

Thursday 30th: John 6. 44-51

Tuesday 28th: John 6. 30-35

Friday 1st: John 14. 1-14

Wednesday 29th: John 6. 35-40

Saturday 2nd: John 6. 60-69



News

Giving Generously: Although the Cathedral building is closed, our mission and ministry continues as we seek to care for and support each other and our community. We lost our income from the Chapter House and events in the Cathedral, but our expenditure has not substantially changed. Therefore, we are enormously grateful to everyone who is continuing to donate regularly through the bank. Now the **Parish Giving Scheme (PGS)** has made it easy for those who were accustomed to give through the collection plate or donation box to give by phone. Many in the congregation already use this helpful scheme which looks after all the administration and claims Gift Aid for us monthly at no cost to the Cathedral. You can register your interest in the PGS by completing a simple secure online form at <http://register.parishgiving.org.uk/> Once submitted you will receive a call from a member of the PGS team, to help arrange a 'paperless' regular donation. It will be helpful to have the PGS parish code for the Cathedral which is **080608001**. There will be a 'Donate by Phone' telephone number available next week. If you need any more information, please do get in touch with Caroline, treasurer@chelmsfordcathedral.org.uk. We really need your continuing help and support to sustain the ministry of the Cathedral, thank you.

Being Resourced

If you would like to receive the Dean's letter emailed to you once a week and you do not already receive it, please email clare.broome@chelmsfordcathedral.org.uk

Growing in Faith resources in a weekly email. If you would like to receive it, please sign up via the 'Church at Home' page of the website or email imogen.nay@chelmsfordcathedral.org.uk

Stations of the Resurrection: How do we encounter the Risen Lord in this time of darkness? Join with the Rev'd Canon Imogen and others as they lead us through personal encounters with the Risen Jesus, look at the website, or email Imogen if you'd like the notes.

The 'Church at Home' page of the website is updated daily with new information, prayers and reflections. Live streamed services can also be accessed from this page normally an hour or so after they have taken place.

Social Time

Saturday 2 May, 8pm

John and Yvonne Spence are holding a **quiz night** via zoom. It is just a bit of fun and an opportunity to get together online. There is no charge. You will need to download the zoom app which is simple to do. Please email Yvonne at yvonnespence@hotmail.com so that she has your email address as she will need to send an 'invite' for you to join the zoom meeting to quiz.

The Cathedral is now completely closed, and all staff are working from home. Therefore, the best way to contact staff is via email if possible. If you are not on email and would like a call from a member of clergy, please contact Marion Palmer tel: 01245 294497. Leave a voicemail message at the prompt and this will be sent as an email to Marion for her to pick up.