

Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2021

Genesis 46: 3, 4 *“I am God, the God of your father’ he said. ‘Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again. And Joseph’s own hand will close your eyes.”*

Exodus 1: 15, 16 *“The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, whose names were Shiphrah and Puah, ‘When you help the Hebrew women in childbirth and observe them on the delivery stool, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live.”*

Psalms 18: 30 *“As for God, his way is perfect;*

*The word of the Lord is flawless.*

*He is a shield*

*For all who take refuge in him.”*

“Take courage”, “believe in yourself”, “have the courage of your convictions”. These every day phrases evoke thoughts of coping in the face of difficulties which sometime seem overwhelming.

Many of us will have seen the musical ‘Joseph and his technicolour dream coat’. What fortitude he must have summoned up to survive being thrown in a well, sold to travelling merchants, made a slave and, falsely accused, thrown in jail.

Jacob, Joseph’s father, on hearing that his son was still alive courageously travelled with his extensive family to Egypt where they are all enslaved for 400 years. A paranoid Pharaoh demanded that the Hebrew midwives kill all male offspring of Hebrew women. What courage they must have had to cleverly get round the order.

The current pandemic presents us with a significant challenge to our ability to cope. What sustained the Israelites in their adversity? Faith in God. The psalmist sums it up well. *“He is a shield, for all who take refuge in him”*.