

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY – April 2020 during ‘LOCKDOWN 1’

April 1st

I am laid low with the lurgy! I am amazed how much I can sleep as my body tries to fight off the invaders.

I am also amazed at how hard it is to do nothing! - well not really nothing - my body is busy!

I found this prayer that seems very relevant.

Des

This is another day, O Lord...

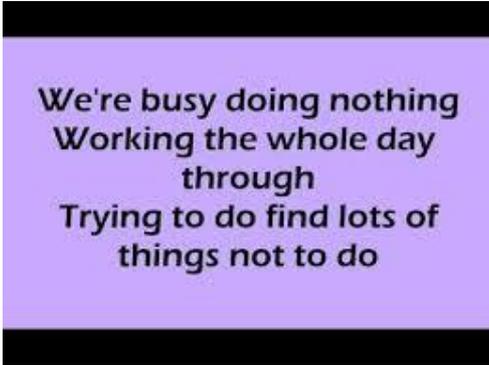
If I am to stand up, help me to stand bravely.

If I am to sit still, help me to sit quietly.

If I am to lie low, help me to do it patiently.

And if I am to do nothing, let me do it gallantly.”

— Kathleen Norris



We're busy doing nothing
Working the whole day
through
Trying to do find lots of
things not to do

April 2nd - Bread



I have been making bread. My nephew reminded me that I could add the easy dried yeast to the measured amount of hand hot water with half a teaspoon of sugar BEFORE I added it to the flour. I had forgotten this. The yeast starts working straight away. I then put the dough into a roomy bowl and honestly it rose wondrously! When baked, well look at it...beautiful and so yummy!

Made me think about how the yeast needed warmth, sweetness and then space to grow. But the yeast I get from my tin is ugly, grainy and smells! Jesus said the Kingdom of God is like yeast. As individuals we are not perfect - we have ugly, grainy and smelly bits - we know this and maybe in this time of isolation we are more aware of them! But with the warmth and sweetness of friendship, fellowship, togetherness over the ‘phone, internet, letters, and so on, when we have lot of physical space between us...perhaps we can grow into something beautiful and even...yummy!

Liz

April 4th - Rise above the storm



A very simple but profound thought for the day from Frances.

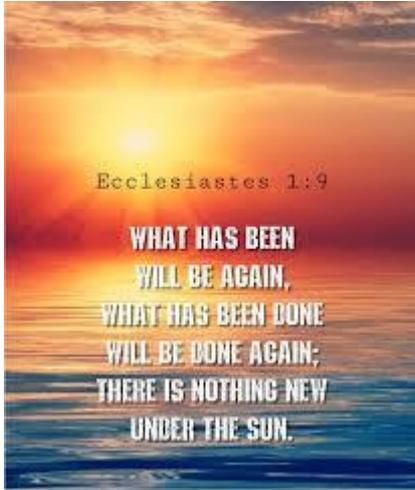
'Rise above the storm and you will see the sunshine'
What might it mean for you to rise above this latest storm!?

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April 5th Palm Sunday

Here is the link to our Palm Sunday service on YouTube <https://youtu.be/60lrSrVSIPY>

April 6th – There is nothing new under the sun



The number of times I have heard the phrase 'these are unprecedented times'! But it is only unprecedented in our lifetimes. Plagues, disasters, epidemics they have all been before and despite our scientific advances could happen again. These words 'there is nothing new under the Sun' were favourites of a dear friend and member of St Mark's who sadly passed away in her sleep on Sunday evening after a very short illness. I am still in shock despite the fact that Peggy was in her 90s.

She was full of wisdom and humility - a rare combination nowadays. Her death will be a great shock to many at St Mark's and beyond.

Des

April 7th 2020 – An unfamiliar path



I walked down a path I hadn't been down before. I had passed it before, but thought it led to a private nursery. Today I realised it was a public footpath. I was a little unsure. I have my prescribed routes; this wasn't one of them and appeared to lead me into woodland. The going was a bit rough in places and the wet spring had left some marshy areas of stagnant water. But there were some beautiful things to see. The fresh limey green look of leaves starting to unfurl, red robin bushes, brilliant fuchsia pink rhododendrons, blue flowers, yellow and white flowers, catkins, and birds. I stood under the canopy of a white blossom tree that smelt glorious. In some of the few elegantly grand houses children's rainbow

pictures had been stuck.

We are all walking an unfamiliar path at the moment and one we have not chosen! The going may be rough, even tough at times but today reminded me to look for the beauty in it. It may not be as obvious as what I saw on my walk - but it will be there.

Liz

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April 8th 2020 – Fat and stodgy!



"These marks measure how tall the children are growing, the others measure how wide Jeff is getting."

I am getting a bit fat and stodgy! Self-isolating for 2 weeks I am ill-disciplined in my exercise routine and am looking forward to a daily walk soon. I also find myself eating stuff I wouldn't normally. I would like to think it is because I haven't got much fresh stuff left but actually there is something so comforting about dunking a digestive, making bread and eating a warm crust with butter on!

So I was thinking:

- I am eating more but doing less...as disciples are we full and fat from 'knowing' stuff about God but stodgy because we don't exercise what we have learnt?
- How can I use this time to find comfort in his words rather than food? I study the Bible to write stuff for sharing at 'work' but how can I let his word soak into me, my heart, my spirit, so that i don't reach for something to fill my mouth?

Going to put the kettle on..... Liz

14th April 2020 – Into God's presence



Faith works at the hospice. She changes into scrubs on the way in and her temperature is checked. On the way out, she removes scrubs, showers, then back into mufti. Scrubs go into a hot wash. She wears protective gear on top of scrubs. All day long she washes her hands. We do too, especially when we have been food shopping, have stood in queues, following a route round the shop and made a contactless payment. No getting near, no touching, but lots of hand washing, sanitising and sometimes

protective gear.

I've been thinking of the Old Testament sacrificial system! Animals were sacrificed, blood spilt, things burnt, hands washed and only the priest could go anywhere near to God's presence on behalf of the people.

But now, because of Jesus, we can go directly into God's presence. He takes us as we are... no need for sacrifices, washing rituals, protective clothing or hand sanitiser. My mind is amazed by it. I hope, over these weeks of contactless life, my heart thrills at it too.

Liz

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April 16th 2020 – Life is like.....



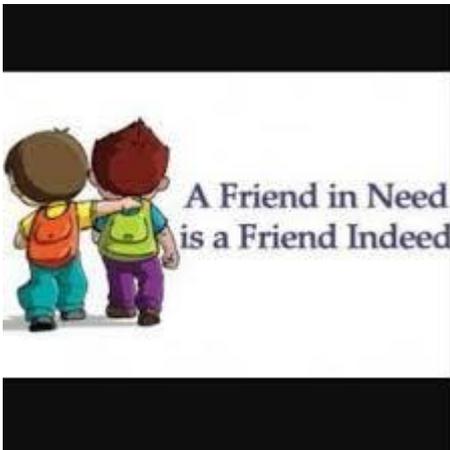
'Life is like a box of chocolates' Forrest Gump's Mama always used to say, 'you never know what your gonna get'.

Liz sent me a get well soon card which had a soup recipe, and I thought

- Life is like a bowl of soup.

All of us ordinary ingredients are chucked in together and when the heat is on we become more than the sum of the parts. Whatever ingredient you are, you have a part to play, a flavour to bring, a bulk to provide. Scientists talk of the 'primordial soup' from which all life evolved, perhaps God is the great Potager Chef? Des

April 21st 2020



'A friend in need, is a friend indeed' is one of those statements that is easy to abuse - ie a friend in need is a pain in the *ss'. Someone rang the local help line (which comes through to my house) on Sunday morning and left a message that they were very depressed. By the time I got back to the person they had cheered up because they had managed to chat to his sister. We had a little chat about our common need - being isolated, being sufferers of depression and by the end of the chat it felt like we were friends of a sort. Need can be the bringer together of people. Here's to the new friends you may be making! Des

27th April 2020 – Love your Neighbour



Today's thought for the day comes from Liz's brother. It is an interesting story from an anthropological point of view - when you add religion it is interesting that the one common 'rule' or 'tenet' of all religions is treat others the way you want to be treated - to love your neighbour as yourself.

Years ago, anthropologist Margaret Mead was asked by a student what she considered to be the first sign of civilization in a culture. The student expected

Mead to talk about fishhooks or clay pots or grinding stones.

But no. Mead said that the first sign of civilization in an ancient culture was a femur (thighbone) that had been broken and then healed. Mead explained that in the animal kingdom, if you break your leg, you die. You cannot run from danger, get to the river for a drink or hunt for food. You are meat for prowling beasts. No animal survives a broken leg long enough for the bone to heal.

A broken femur that has healed is evidence that someone has taken time to stay with the one who fell, has bound up the wound, has carried the person to safety and has tended the person through recovery. Helping someone else through difficulty is where civilization starts, Mead said.

"We are at our best when we serve others. Be civilized." - Ira Byock

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29th April 2020 – Worry never changes things



Today's thought for the day is from Frances
Matthew 6:25 *"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?"*

In these difficult times it is easy to worry about shopping , especially if you are self-isolating and cannot get deliveries. We have been lucky and have a good friend who stays up at night and manages to reserve slots for deliveries for friends and family. And we hear of so many good deeds being done all over the country. The message was 'take your worry and turn it into prayer.'" That is not easy as sometimes worry gets a grip on you

and it is hard to shake it off. I guess we must hold on to the good things and trust that God will help us through the difficult times.

Frances x