

"I dearly hope and pray that many of these things that we have missed will go ahead as usual this year." That is what I wrote last month, thinking about the forthcoming Christmas celebrations. "I trust though that through all the uncertainties you still managed to find a way of enjoying Christmas. We are at the beginning of a new year; putting the old one behind us. It can be a new start, not more of the same." That is what I wrote as part of my letter for January 2021, never thinking for one minute that I would be having the same sort of thoughts 12 months later.

Like many people, I would like us to be able to get back to being able to plan things and to knowing with a degree of certainty that they would go ahead. Things like: planning time with family; or planning holidays; or making plans relating to work. It would be good not to have the uncertainty, and in the back of one's mind the thought, 'will I need to rewrite the plans again?' I look forward to the day of not having to think about LFTs or PCRs; or wondering if I'll need a Covid passport for travel or anything else that I'd like to do.

Now I'm working on 'Plan B', hoping we'll not have to redraft things for 'Plan C'. Perhaps it's a timely reminder for all of us not to take things for granted; not to take this precious life for granted. I am absolutely certain that those families who have lost loved ones to Covid, or are trying to help loved ones through Long Covid, would echo the sentiment: Do not take life for granted.

Life is precious; life is also fragile. Life is to be lived. We might not be able to do it in exactly the way we want, or had expected, but we can still appreciate it. Let the uncertainties caused by Covid remind you at the start of this New Year of the thing that is important in life: our relationships with one another. As we begin another year, make the effort to continue to contact your family; to renew a relationship that has perhaps lapsed. Make an effort to relate to members of your family, or to a friend. Moreover, make an effort to relate to God this year, because through all the uncertainties of this life, He is the one constant. He is still there, still loving, still caring about you. We are at the beginning of a new year, putting the old one behind us. It can be a new start, for us all, with our important relationships.

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