

Dear Friend

Now that the lockdown is beginning to be eased, many people's thoughts are turning to what the future may look like. I sense an increasing degree of unease as the government comes under mounting criticism not just from the opposition - it's what they're meant to do after all! - but more worryingly from some of the scientists who form the Sage committee. We need to remember that it is a rare thing for there to be consensus across the scientific community, and there is still so much that is unknown about this deadly virus. Although the numbers of Covid-19 cases and Covid-related deaths are moving in the right direction, it is clear that we are a long way from being at the end of this crisis and that there is a real risk of that trend being reversed. We need to keep praying for the government, as well as for the scientists, that this risk will not be realised and that people who are anxious to return to a more normal way of life will not put others in danger, and that those whose anxiety may prevent them from living a more normal lifestyle will not allow that fear to overcome them.

As we all hope to be able to return to the church building to worship together once again, we need to ensure that the risks to worshippers are minimised. What will worship look and feel like with social distancing? Will we be prevented from singing? How may it be possible to partake in Holy Communion? Will we be able to live-stream services so that those who are unable to attend church can continue to share in our worship? How can we ensure that the many groups who use the building will not pose a risk to themselves or to us? I'm sure there are many other questions we need to answer before we reopen the church. No doubt there will be guidelines - or more likely strict instructions - issued by the national church and/or the diocese that we will have to adhere to. Let's hope and pray that there is a healthy dose of common sense in those instructions!

One thing we can be sure about is that for the foreseeable future things will not be the same. In and of itself this is likely to cause anxiety. As we celebrate Trinity Sunday this weekend, and ponder the great mystery that is the living God, let us be willing and able to hand over all our anxious thoughts and fears to the One who first of all knows all about them and exactly how we are feeling, and who alone is able to free us from everything that prevents us from being and becoming all he wants us to be and to become. Which is his holy people who have been set free in order that he, through us, might reveal to the world the nature of true freedom - freedom not just from fear, but from guilt, from our sin that binds us, from our culture that moulds us, from our past that holds us, and from whatever we need to let go of, in order that we may take hold of him who in Jesus Christ has taken hold of us.

Although in these days we are not free physically, may our spirits experience the freedom that God our Father has won for us through his Son and gives to us by his Holy Spirit, to his praise and glory.

Verse for today: Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

*1 Peter 5.7.*



A prayer for today:

'God who is love, help me to know that perfect love casts out fear, and so help me to give you all my anxious thoughts, and in return may I receive your perfect love and peace, and may that peace guard and keep my heart and mind in Christ Jesus. Amen.'

It's good to keep smiling!



Did you hear about the 0800 free phone helpline for atheists?  
You dial the number but nobody answers!

May God bless you and keep you today and always.

With love and prayer

Simon.