Dear Friend

The psalm set for Morning Prayer today is Psalm 34. This is another psalm with music attached – "O taste and see how gracious the Lord is" by Ralph Vaughan Williams. This is an anthem which many of you may have heard or even sung and has a wonderful tune.

Using "Reflections on the Psalms" published by Church House Publishing, I am quoting words from the comments by Angela Tilbury. She writes: "Like a number of the psalms, this one begins with thanksgiving and blessing which then opens out into testimony, reflection and teaching. It is notable for the particular joy of the opening and the call to fellow worshippers to find the same healing from fear and shame that the sufferer has found. By seeking the face of God, the 'poor soul' is lifted beyond his troubles into a place of security, protected by the angel of God's presence."

As we face the possibility of a gradual relaxing of the lockdown, many people have a fear of going out now. Many workers have not been able to stay at home and have suffered the consequences. Those who are shielded will need to continue to stay at home. The rest of us must face the need to go out to work and socialize (at a distance!) again gradually as the "cure" is becoming more harmful, both mentally and economically, than the disease. There are words in this psalm that just fit this situation – it's the miracle of the psalms that there are words here for every occasion.

This psalm has many memorable verses which are quoted fairly often in the New Testament so clearly it is a psalm loved by Jesus' disciples. It is worth remembering that while we know that God will answer our prayers in his own way, this might take a long time but will happen eventually. We need to continue our prayers and aim to be as faithful as God is to us.

Let us pray

Send your holy angels
to watch over us, O God,
that on our lips will be found your truth
and in our hears your love;
so we may ever taste your goodness
in the land of the living;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen