

Dear friends

It feels at the moment as though the way we are living our lives is normal. Hopefully, it is not – because I miss deeply the company of others, or the opportunity to hug members of my family, to share a meal with them.



We all know that we are at a difficult point of this pandemic and some are fearful that the relaxation of restrictions will lead to an extension of these lockdown rules and, worse, a second spike in infections and deaths. On top of that, the dreadful murder of George Floyd simply because of the colour of his skin has brought to the fore a deep and understandable anger about the unjust persecution of sections of our society, worldwide.

Today in the church though, we are offered hope. Not just the hope that it may soon be safe to reopen our churches, but hope through the love of God, the love of Christ and the love of the Holy Spirit. We celebrate Ephrem of Syria today. Ephrem was born about 306,

taught in Nisibis (Mesopotamia) and settled in Edessa (south-east Turkey), establishing a school of theology there. He died in 373, whilst ministering to victims of the plague. Ephrem was a prolific writer – poetry and hymns, amongst which was this:

The Light of the just and joy of the upright is Christ Jesus our Lord.  
Begotten of the Father, He manifested himself to us.  
He came to rescue us from darkness and to fill us with the radiance of His light.  
Day is dawning upon us; the power of darkness is fading away.

These are the opening words to one of his 'Hymns of Light'. It acknowledges that we are in a deep and dark place indeed, but first it acknowledges the light of Christ, the generosity with which we are filled with His light. Isn't that an uplifting way to begin when we are feeling down and miserable? Of course, it doesn't take away the problems and issues we are living with at the moment, but it does help us to realise we are not in this alone.

So today, as you work your way through the mass of chores that we seem to be able to find to do in this lockdown, or as you fulfil your employment obligations either at home or by travelling to a place of work, give thanks for the light of Christ in your life that makes it all possible!

I leave you with some more uplifting words from that same hymn:

Let us light our lamps and go forth to meet Him.  
Let us find our joy in Him, for He has found joy in us.  
He will indeed rejoice us with His marvellous light

Stay safe, and remain hopeful.

Linda