

Dear all

Last night I had a bit of a restless night. It doesn't often happen, I'm glad to say, but when it does, my mind races about thinking of a dozen things at once. One thing I was trying to think of was the 1st line of a particular Easter hymn, and I couldn't rest until I had remembered it. When I did finally get back to sleep, I had the most peculiar dream. I can remember throwing a toilet roll off a very tall bridge (something like the Clifton Suspension Bridge), and speaking in perfect German (which I can't. I can just about order a beer!). Mr Freud, can you explain?

Dreams are strange things, aren't they? One theory, which seems very plausible, is that they are our mind sorting things out – perhaps a bit like a computer defragging! In the bible they are often a means by which God speaks to his people. The most famous example of this is, of course, Joseph. But we are told that it will be a common experience for all believers. The prophet Joel says *I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions*. Peter picks this up in his Pentecost Day sermon, when he says *In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams*.

I'm not sure that we are in 'the last days' as most people would understand it – church history is littered with groups who were convinced that 'the end was nigh' – but it is a gift of God's Spirit that He speaks to us in many and varied ways. I wonder what He is saying to us today – about now, and about what will happen when we emerge from the current lockdown. Somehow, I suspect it won't be about hurling toilet rolls!

Redemptorist Press are offering the DVD version of one of their best-selling books; *Stations of the Cross - Then and Now* by Fr Denis McBride free online from 1st – 13th April. The link is:

https://www.rpbooks.co.uk/stations-of-the-cross-then-and-now-free-reflections?utm_source=RP+Newsletter+2020&utm_campaign=2758ea10e8-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_01_13_04_38_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_61d90c626e-2758ea10e8-217668499&mc_cid=2758ea10e8&mc_eid=0acf76ea1e

You will need to scroll down a little.

One of our church members, who wishes to remain anonymous, has penned the following poem:

HEAR THERE AND EVERYWHERE

Hear there and everywhere
 Coved-19 what a scare
 Gloom and doom wherever you go
 No family gatherings what a blow
 Wash your hands stay indoors
 Our NHS and key workers we give applause
 Our elderly and alone long days to fill
 A phone call perhaps to chat and trill
 Worry worry what to do
 I have just the thing for you

STOP

Here there and everywhere
 Our Lord and Saviour just stop and stare
 Among the frightened, worried, despairing

The Lord gives hope, peace, healing, caring
On your daily exercise
Stop and stare just open your eyes
The colours, leaves and flowers in bloom
God's wonderful creation to lift the gloom
Just remember what our Lord said
Maybe say it before going to bed
I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go
And just be grateful we haven't got snow!

Philip Astle writes that he has been keeping his spirits up by watching the YouTube videos by the wonderful Voces8 choir. Below is a link to 'Sing Joyfully' by William Byrd for all of us who are sorely missing our live choral music at present. The words are from Psalm 81, verses 1-4.

<https://youtu.be/e6JfcFhs9Y8>

Another prayer from Nick Fawcett:

Here's another prayer that may help you to find words to articulate some of your thoughts and fears when you're struggling to pray during these dark days of the coronavirus pandemic, and remind you that, however much it may feel like it, you are not alone.

How can I bring before you, Lord, my trivial concerns,
when thousands are dying?
How can I ask for your blessing this day,
when a multitude are at risk?
How can I trouble you with some minor request,
when many, even at this moment,
are fighting for breath,
fighting for survival?
How can I seek guidance in little things,
when a frantic host cry out to you,
yet seem to receive no answer?
How can I pray about any such matters,
when my thoughts keep returning to just one thing alone:
the crisis that overshadows us,
the uncertainty that stretches far ahead –
a bleak and scary void?
Forgive me, Lord.
My thoughts are in a jumble,
but you know what's in my heart,
what I truly feel,
what I yearn to say,
even if I struggle at the moment to express it.
Hear my unspoken words,
my heartfelt plea –
for me,
for others
and for all –
and, in your mercy, answer.
Amen.

Finally, a sign of the times, perhaps! The caption is "Hello, hello, hello! What's going on here then?"



Stay safe.

Blessings and love

Mark

Revd Mark Williams