

Dear all

Today's issue of the Church Times has an article for which the headline reads *Over-50s extraverts coping best in crisis*. This is part of a study from the University of York and the Church Times, which suggests that this group feel less exhausted, calmer, less stressed and closer to God and the church than do the under-50s.

Taking the 2 parts, it suggests that over-50s have less pressure on their hands because under-50s are more likely to be juggling work and young families, especially with so many children being home from school.

Perhaps more surprisingly, it appears extraverts are coping better than introverts. One might expect the opposite, however the feeling is that extraverts are coping better with handling the virtual world, and are able to draw strength from many different contacts, whereas introverts tend to rely on a few deeper relationships.

You may agree, or beg to differ. The conclusions are based on a survey of 3000 people to date. However, the survey is still open. If you wish to contribute – particularly if you don't fit these findings – they are strongly encouraging you to contribute. Please go to tinyurl.com/yqsq9fy2

In another article, the Archbishop of Canterbury speaks about the importance of good mental health, and our need to spend money to support this. The Archbishop himself struggles with depression, and knows the devastating effect that this can have – no one is immune.

This week is Mental Health Awareness Week. The theme for the week is **Kindness**. To see more about this, the link is:

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/campaigns/mental-health-awareness-week>

The article also mentions the charity Zero Suicide Alliance. Suicide is the biggest single killer of men under the age of 50. The starting point of the charity is that suicide is preventable, and offers online training to help – not for professionals, but for everyone. There is a gateway course, or a longer more detailed one. I have just completed the latter – I would say more like 40 minutes than the 20 it suggests. It is excellent, and offers an empathetic understanding that would be helpful in many contexts. I would highly recommend it for everyone. The link is:

<https://www.zerosuicidealliance.com/training>

Here is a prayer I have come across in a service from the Diocese of Southwell:

Heavenly Father, We thank you that you made us, you love us and invite us to do your work on earth as the body of Christ. May we see the needs of others and respond hear their cry and listen to them; speak words of hope and comfort reach out and touch them to reassure and comfort; Help them whether it's a cup of tea or something more Walk alongside them so they are not alone. May we together strive to make this a world where fewer become stressed, distressed, depressed and anxious. May we let others help us, so that all have the opportunity to enjoy helping us too. In doing this together may none feel over-burdened, all enjoy both giving and receiving; and the body of Christ be strengthened in this place. Amen.

I personally often turn to music as a way of finding a balance in life – sometimes music that is soothing and relaxing; oddly, and perhaps counter-intuitively, sometimes music that is turbulent and powerful, which

can also be cathartic. It is important to know what we can do to unwind and re-centre ourselves. What is it that does you good? Seek it out!

Here is the latest prayer from Nick Fawcett:

Lord,
we stand outside week by week,
applauding essential workers in this time of crisis,
acknowledging their vital contribution to society –
not just nurses and NHS staff,
but countless care workers too,
and innumerable others who have contributed to our welfare,
saving us from total chaos.
We praise them,
laud them,
extol them,
and at the same time moves are made to exclude them in years to come,
to keep out migrant labour,
despite us in so many cases depending on their work to maintain services.
Forgive the crass hypocrisy,
the proclaiming of one thing yet doing quite another;
the glib declaration that we value these people
that is too often denied by the wages we pay
and the prejudice we show.
We talk about indebtedness,
of how grateful we are,
and how much we owe to the few.
Help us truly to believe it,
and to show the truth of that,
not simply in gestures,
but in meaningful word and deed.
Amen.



Stay safe

Blessings and love

Mark