

Dear all

Those who have been following the story of Nugget and her operation following a cancer diagnosis will be very sad to hear that, on Thursday, we made the horrible decision to have her put to sleep. Nugget had been slowing down a bit for a while, which we put down to the heat as she coped with the extra physicality of only 3 legs. This week, however, she hadn't eaten for 2 days, and was hardly able to stand up. An X-ray confirmed that her chest was riddled with cancer, and there was no treatment.

2 memories will stay forever with me. Firstly, the pure enjoyment she had of bounding along on her 3 legs on her walks, tongue flapping away. And secondly, on her last morning, as I picked up my keys and left to go to Morning Prayer, I turned to see her in the doorway. She had struggled up to come as usual – but the steps defeated her.

Unfortunately, that means I now have no excuse! If ever I feel a bit out of sorts, and the thought comes into my mind “shall I skip a day”, I'm going to feel so guilty, I will have to live up to the example of my dog.

I have a keyring on my noticeboard in my study ‘I pray that I could be the kind of person my dog thinks I am’...

Vale Nugget – best of dogs.

In my last letter, I included 3 prayers that Nick Fawcett had written following my suggestion that it would be good to have prayers that would take up those mundane, tedious, life-sapping aspects of coronavirus behaviour, and prayerfully reflect on them, taking us out of ourselves and into the wider context. Here are 3 more prayers, with Nick's introductions...

Here's another prayer in response to the continuing coronavirus crisis, this one inspired by the experience of twice having a Covid test before going into hospital.

Lord God,
as I undergo this Covid test,
examine also my words,
my deeds,
my thoughts,
my heart,
my mind,
my soul,
my living,
my loving.
Search deep within my being,
and put a right spirit within me.
Test me,
and wherever I fall short, make me new.
Help me to see the places where my life is lacking,
my faith weak,
my commitment deficient,
and through the power of the Father,
the love of the Son
and the presence of the Spirit

breathe health into my discipleship,
transforming me into the person you would have me be.
Amen.

Here's a fifth prayer in response to the continuing coronavirus crisis, taking as its starting point the act of putting on latex gloves while out walking to avoid infection from gates, stiles, fences or anything else I might touch.

As I put on these gloves, Lord,
seeking to avoid contamination with coronavirus,
teach me also,
in my day-to-day life,
to avoid whatever may undermine the health of my faith,
infecting my commitment,
sullyng my thoughts,
tainting my deeds,
polluting my love for you and for others.
Just as I take seriously the risks posed by Covid,
may I recognise that the threat to my spiritual wellbeing is equally as real,
equally as dangerous,
equally as insidious,
taking hold within,
unseen and unnoticed at first,
until its consequences are felt
and damage is done.
Alert me, Lord, to the temptation to compromise,
to downplay my faults,
to ignore your call,
to unthinkingly follow the way of world,
and, instead, keep me fit and strong,
in body, mind and spirit.
Amen.

A sixth prayer in response to the continuing coronavirus crisis, building on the idea of sterilising our home, or what enters it, during this troubled time.

Lord,
as I cleanse this door handle,
may I make time to welcome you and others into my heart.
As I cleanse this meal table,
may I remember the poor,
the hungry,
the countless victims of injustice and exploitation.
As I cleanse these foodstuffs,
may I give thanks for the plenty I enjoy,
rejoicing in the bounty of your creation
and the work involved in growing,
harvesting,
packaging,
transporting
and selling it.
As I cleanse these deliveries,

may I appreciate the labour,
the technology,
the entrepreneurship,
the interdependent web of human agency
that has gone into making them possible,
and that forms such an integral part of modern life.
As I cleanse these utensils and crockery,
may I be mindful of how I feed my faith
and how careful I am,
or otherwise,
to avoid that which may undermine its health.
As I cleanse myself, Lord,
may I consecrate my hands,
my feet,
my health,
my strength,
my mind,
my being,
to your service
and the pursuit of your kingdom,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Amen.

I would heartily recommend his blog, at <https://nickfawcett.uk/> You can sign up to receive each new posting by email.

Nick has shared that he has been struggling with diminishing royalties over time, despite having written over 150 books, and that he might have to curtail his writing, and concentrate on editing, which pays the bills! Nick's writing is truly inspirational, and I would highly recommend looking out for his devotional material. His blog will be featuring some discounted material in the near future.

Last week I shared 2 pieces of music based on the phrase from the gospel reading *Tu es Petrus* (You are Peter). I was going to make a confident statement that there would be no song based on the words *Get thee behind me, Satan*. I thought however I had better check... Here is *Get thee behind me Satan* sung by Ella Fitzgerald!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6vXo8BNtD38>



Stay safe

Blessings and love

Mark