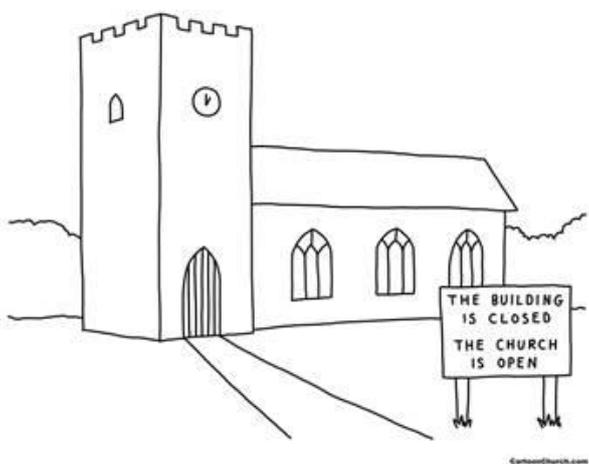


Dear all

My apologies for missing a day – I have had computer go-slow problems, which are now, I am glad to say, sorted.

It is Passion Sunday tomorrow. If you like to listen/watch services, you will be able to join services on BBC Radio Four at 8.10 tomorrow morning, or later at 10.45 on BBC 1. Here in DSJ Ted and I are trying to get some things online – though they will not be in time for tomorrow morning. If you are into Facebook, please follow DSJ Priory Church. We will also try to get some things up on YouTube and on the church website.

Meanwhile, while our church building remains locked and empty, the Church carries on. Thanks to Dave Walker for providing the following cartoon free of charge.



An erstwhile colleague from Southwark Diocese has posted the following 'Meditation on the closing of churches':

Churches may be glad of the stillness.

These great stone ships seldom have the chance to hunker down into replenishing silence.

Christianity is too talkative. Noisy religion.

The Society for Standing Up and Sitting Down Again.

The Society for Annunciation of a Momentary Silence

You see your empty church and see shipwreck

And think that because you are not there in linen robes with rehearsals of creeds, that prayer is not there.

But your churches and temples are not empty.

Silence is there. Praying in her many houses.

Clergy nor creed nor any religion own Her.

Stillness beyond all religion,

Yet deeply at its core,

Even while you fill temples with the clatter of words.

Let Silence be the guardian and keeper of these stone vessels.

She who keeps the stillness on the ocean's floor

Who tends the cave where no noise echoes because no noise enters

Hers is the aching heart that hides ancient atomic groan  
And her home, the rest between the beats in every heartbeat  
Look out to the stars beyond the stars and listen  
Listen to Her listening to the listening of your own

Go within and find Her in the hush.  
In the breath of alleluia in the night  
In the inhalation of hope before waking  
Hers is the softness between the breath.  
And the hidden quiet light that lingers at a death

Do not fret about your empty church.  
Silence holds the space holy  
And always did.  
She holds all things and mourns all things  
She is in all things  
She holds every story but her own.  
She knows each name, with no need to know her own  
Let Silence guard the stillness and the stones.  
While you care for the bereaved and those full of fear  
That is your creaturely task. The task of all who call each to be priest to each and every other.

And when the great keys are turned, the wooden doors re-open,  
Tread gently. Do not rush to fill the stillness

The great stone ships held their prayer for you.  
They bade the Absolute to enter in.  
They prayed with you.

Honour them with silence of your own.

*Gilo, (Co-Editor of Letters to a Broken Church)*

Stay safe.

Blessings

Mark