

Reflections

Surviving Covid-19 through Holy Week and Easter

OUR Churches, both St Boniface at Okehampton and the Holy Family at Chagford, are usually packed with people during Holy Week and Easter.

The richness of piety during Holy Week and the joy of celebration at Easter are profound for everyone who usually comes to the services. Certainly, this year it's very different and yet the usual message of hope and the need for calm in the midst of panic and despair are of paramount importance.

The outbreak of this Covid-19 pandemic has brought the world to a standstill. The day-by-day and ever-increasing statistics of global infection and death are alarming. Medical and health experts are in utter

dismay and disbelief at the jet speed spread of this virus.

They openly acknowledge their struggles at the herculean task of finding a potential cure and effective vaccination to this invisible killer in the near future. The sheer force of collateral damage to human lives and the global economy sets the public in panic mode, frightened and confused.

All countries in the world are trying to fight this pandemic through every possible means. So far the most common method of response for most countries, including ours, seems to be lockdown. It is neither a permanent solution nor a cure but the only available choice at the moment to buy time

until more robust alternative approaches to save lives are identified.

Under the present climate no one is certain how long this lockdown will continue. It is no fun to be prisoners in our own houses for weeks on end, especially when the weather is becoming warmer, something we have been desperately awaiting all these months.

Staying indoors for long periods, without the usual access to people and places we love most, is frustrating and upsetting. Such a scenario is usually a strong contributor to our mental and physical ill health.

On top of that, the increased airtime the media has these days for Covid-19, with

graphic demonstrations of mounting infection and death statistics, adds to the stress, anxiety and panic that we may find difficult to manage presently.

Certainly, the public needs to be informed and concerned about the seriousness of the situation so that necessary precautions are in place in order to stop the spread of this contagion but to aid our survival in isolation, airing unhelpful information should be avoided in order to stop setting viewers on perpetual panic mode.

To enhance our life of 'social distancing' and 'isolation' during Holy Week, Pope Francis's message recommends engaging in 'creativity of love' that can increase

our hope and keep us healthy and calm as individuals and families. In these uncertain times while our politicians, police, researchers, medical professionals and volunteers are doing their best to get us out of this peril, let us continue to pray like the Psalmist: 'Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him. Truly, he is my rock and my salvation. He is my fortress; I will not be shaken' (Ps 62: 5-6).

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