

From Fr Simon,

Dear all

It is hard to know what to say in this magazine because things are changing so rapidly. Every day (and sometimes every hour) our battle with Coronavirus is developing. Whatever I write will be out of date the next day. At this moment it has just been announced that schools will close and that shops will try to curb panic buying. Public events and gatherings – including church services – are to stop. Our world, our society and our villages are changing rapidly, and we don't know where it will end or how long it will go on for.

But people are fantastic. Groups are forming, phone calls to the most vulnerable are being made, shopping is being bought for the elderly; love is being shown in very real and practical ways. Our lives are being challenged and changed, but your care for others is unwavering.

Nearly 2000 years ago, Mary Magdalene was in the garden. Everything had changed for her. Her saviour was dead and with it all meaning was lost. There was an emptiness – a painful gap in her world. This happened so quickly: one minute the crowds were cheering Jesus as he rode into Jerusalem on the donkey, the next they were calling for his death. Like Coronavirus, the story of Jesus' death developed rapidly.

On the third day after the crucifixion Mary is in the garden, in turmoil and despair. And then ... Jesus calls her name. He's alive! This is the first Easter Sunday when everything is given new meaning: in death there is new life, in sorrow there is joy. When it seemed that all was lost and all was chaos God came to Mary and called her by name.

Jesus doesn't just call Mary's name, he calls yours. In the middle of the turmoil of Coronavirus, Jesus calls your name. Whatever happens, somehow God is there, with you – calling you, encouraging you, loving you, showing you hope and purpose. God calls us in this world and beyond this world; God calls us to life eternal.

While we pray for a cure and for healing, we also pray that, whatever happens, we can find peace and purpose in God, because Jesus is with you, calling you.

Christ is risen, he is risen indeed.

Notices

All public services are cancelled until further notice. But Fr Simon will be celebrating Holy Communion by himself on Sundays, 9.30am in Golcar and 11am in Longwood. These should be streamed on the appropriate facebook pages.

Fr Simon will also be saying his prayers daily in church, please join your prayers to his, wherever you are.

Both churches will be open for people to come in, pray, sit, reflect or light a candle at the following times: