

From Fr Simon,

Dear all

A long time ago a whole nation had to leave their lives behind. All their usual routines and expectations were taken away. They had to live day to day, from moment to moment. Often they felt lost and abandoned. Often they felt lonely and hopeless. They didn't know how long it would all last, there seemed to be no end to their situation.

I am talking, of course, about the Israelites wandering in the wilderness for 40 long years.

But this sounds rather familiar with our current situation. Our lives have changed and what we used to take for granted has been denied us and is now just a memory. And we haven't even got a promised land to aim for; we've been told that we might never get rid of COVID 19 - that we will have to learn to live with it.

The Israelites grew despondent; they started to give up hope and got ill-disciplined. They grew argumentative and got in the habit of blaming each other. But God used this time to get them to focus on him. God gave them manna every night as a reminder to the Israelites to look to him, every day. God used the enforced simplicity of their lives to give the people a new rhythm of praying and daily devotion – wherever they were.

Lockdown is our wilderness. It is not easy, and it gets harder. Temptations get stronger: the temptation not to pray, the temptation to break lockdown, the temptation to buy in to the blame culture.

Let us learn from the Israelites:

- Try to find a time each day to pray. We all pray in different ways, but aim to have a time dedicated to God – a time when you are not doing anything else except praying in your own way
- Try to read a bit of the bible each day. And read something else with meaning too (I've just finished "Stand up and Deliver" by Andy Kind)
- Try to support people who are doing their best to lead us. Yes, we need to hold people to account, but we also need to pull together, do our bit and raise morale
- Try to find a bit more simplicity. This does not mean to be simplistic. The simple life understands the deep issues of life and finds the simplest way through. Whereas the simplistic life assumes it knows best without actually bothering to get involved with anything.

And finally, remember that unlike the Israelites in the wilderness, we have Jesus – who is with you, who died, and rose again. God is with you in the wilderness and in life: you are not alone, and never will be.

Christ is risen, he is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Notices

All services in public places are cancelled until further notice. But Fr Simon conducts worship from the vicarage which is live streamed on the churches' Facebook pages and websites. These are also available for later viewing:

- Sundays 10am, Holy Communion, both churches (the order of service, with full words, is usually available on the website)
- Mondays and Wednesdays 9am Morning Prayer, and Tuesdays 6.30pm Holy Communion on St Mark's facebook
- Tuesdays and Thursdays 9am Morning Prayer on St John's facebook and website

The order for morning prayer can be found here: <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-service-daily-prayer>

Pentecost Food Parcels

For those who take regular walks, could you make a detour on **Sunday 31st May 10am – 2pm** to make a food or cash donation for Golcar Mutual Aid or the Welcome Centre?

A bin will be available to drop things in St John's churchyard – at the gate to the vicarage.



Please ensure food is sealed and in date, make any cheques payable to “The Welcome Centre” and remember to:

- drop and go
- keep at least 2 metres from people not in your household.

For on-line donations see <https://www.thewelcomecentre.org/pages/31-donate>

You can also post cheques to the Vicarage, Church Street, Golcar HD7 4PX

It is traditional to do a Whitwalk on this day of Pentecost (also called Whit Sunday or Whitsun). For those who wish, please walk past both churches (St John's Golcar and St Mark's Longwood) or walk so that you can see both churches, and as you do pray for the congregations and people in the parishes.

Email any photos of the day to revscrook@gmail.com