

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

Wednesday 25th March 2020

by Janet Reid



I walked through a virtually deserted village this morning, for my permitted daily exercise, to post a letter, but what a beautiful morning it was. The sky was blue, the magnolia trees and camellias are just coming into flower, and there is a definite warmth to the sun now. So many signs of hope in the midst of a troubled world. As I walked, feeling incredibly grateful that I could, I thought of all those who couldn't enjoy the beauty of all of this. I thought of NHS workers, working long hours in crowded hospitals; people living in high rise flats who can't get out without breaching the 'social distancing' guidelines because they don't have gardens; the vulnerable elderly and those with underlying health conditions who are forcibly confined to their homes; teachers with new timetables and new children because the children of those vital to our well-being need to be looked after. The Coronavirus dominates our thoughts and actions at the moment but even within that there is humour. My son in law – one of those who may well be teaching all through the Easter holidays – was approached by an 8 year old with a plant book. Look Mr Hickey, he said, a Coronavirus plant. Unaccustomed to the reading skills of an average 8 year old he was a bit taken aback and then realisedactually if you look carefully you'll see that it's a Carnivorous plant! Even those who are in the thick of the extra work created by this crisis can find time to see the funny side of the redefinition of a Venus flytrap.

Walking on through the village I came across two rainbows stuck in windows – something which is catching on here and maybe, encouraged by Liz and JC, children and adults alike will follow suit in their neighbourhoods. What a positive sign of hope they are. The familiar story of Noah's Ark is well known to all of us, but seeing them there was somehow reassuring. 'God said to Noah. This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.' (Gen 9:

17) God is with us, in the midst of us, as we all cope in our various ways with the difficulties that we face together. We are not alone, the storm will pass, and we will have come through this stronger than before. We have the promise of happier, better times to come. Our communities, both at Amersham Free Church and in the various areas in which we live are already pulling together in ways which had almost been forgotten since the war. We are finding other ways of being church so that even if we can't actually meet together in the immediate future we can worship together somehow. We are talking to each other perhaps more than we did before by phone or across fences at a safe distance. We are encouraging each other by email and being creative with our time. We are learning to take pleasure in the simple things, and maybe most importantly we are being forced to take time to stop rushing around and be still.

My prayer is for those suffering from the virus, for those treating them, and for all of us whether we succumb to it or not, that we enjoy the new directions in which we are taken, that we find time to laugh, to encourage each other, and maybe even to learn new skills, our loving and ever present God being our guide and comforter.