

*Anglican Chaplaincy of All Saints' Marseille
with Aix-en-Provence
and the Luberon*

NEWSLETTER MARCH 2020

Passiontide

One of the strange things about living through a crisis is what it does to our perception of time. As I write this, it is only a week since France went into lockdown in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, yet for many it feels like one of the longest weeks they can remember. Trying to keep up with rapidly evolving responses by governments, both in France and in other places where we have loved ones living, adds to the sense of distortion. The UK's response has been about a week behind, and it has been like watching a film in slow motion. As the lockdown continues, the sense of disrupted time may start to become less strange, and it is possible that a sense may also develop - at least for some - of having more time than usual in the day. If so, let us try to use it well. Across the chaplaincy and beyond, people are already doing a great deal to support one another through a time of deep uncertainty and fear, against a backdrop of huge sacrificial commitment by those working in healthcare and allied services to care for the sick. For those of us not working on the front line, this can become a time when we too discover what our deepest commitments are, what we live by, and why it makes a difference.

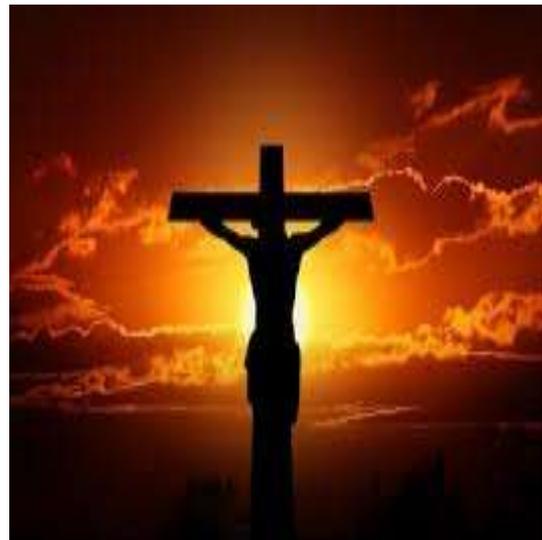
Faith leaders are uniting in their offers of support and prayer. On 25th March, the Feast of the Annunciation, when we recall God's promise of closeness to us in the Incarnation, many Christians joined the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and Pope Francis in pausing at noon to say Psalm 23 and the Lord's Prayer.

Psalm 23, with its familiar words ‘The Lord is my Shepherd’, is a good one to keep close in times of intense fear and loss. It is about how God relates to us at different times in our lives, good and bad – in green pastures (normal life), still waters (our times of refreshment, the times we have felt fully alive, time spent with our loved ones), right pathways (the times we have had to take difficult decisions) and even the valley of the shadow of death (where many in the world feel they are now). All the stages of what it means to be human, which Christ shared with us. Throughout our lives God is present to us, faithful to us, and we can never be separated from his goodness and mercy, whatever happens to us and around us. Psalm 23 was written in response to an experience of exile, when the people of Israel saw a face of God they hadn’t seen before, a God who suffered out of love. They felt closer to him in their hardship than they had in the time of plenty. May we find that same comfort now, through Christ our Shepherd.

This Sunday, the focus of Lent turns from the wilderness to Jerusalem, as we prepare to follow Christ through the time of his Passion. We do so in the knowledge that it ends not in defeat but in resurrection, the victory of love over suffering and death. May God bless you through these weeks, and may you feel closer to him than ever.

The Collect for Passion Sunday

Most merciful God,
who by the death and resurrection of your Son
Jesus Christ
delivered and saved the world:
grant that by faith in him who suffered on the
cross
we may triumph in the power of his victory;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.



Chaplaincy news

Most events have now been postponed or cancelled, but chaplaincy members are still connected through phone calls, emails and our website. A sense of community is forming, partly through the act of worship we share on Sundays. We are currently planning material for Holy Week and Easter. Meanwhile the list of resources for prayer, reflection and other information on the website is growing. Please keep sending them in.

Although the Lent study course has been suspended, we plan to return to the Pilgrim material at a later date. The choir visit in April has also been postponed, but some of their recordings are among the resources now on our website.

Lent Appeal

Our Lent appeal, however, continues. Members of the chaplaincy are invited to continue putting spare change into a jamjar for us to collect sometime after Easter and send to the Bishop in Europe's Lent Appeal, which this year is to help raise funds for a new school classroom in the Diocese of Mumias, Kenya.

Standing Orders/donations

Closer to home, our other appeal continues too. A few of you have kindly put in place standing orders to help the chaplaincy through the time when there are no church collections. This is becoming increasingly pressing, as the chaplaincy has few reserves and has lost around 80% of its income. (None of the helpful government assistance that has been announced applies to churches.) The email we sent out on 7th March included details of how to set up a standing order in France or the UK. If you would like to do this, or to make a one-off donation, and no longer have access to the details please email us on anglican.marseille@gmail.com or contact +33 7 66 01 71 50. Thank you for your support.

Useful links

In addition to free channels, a number of platforms that would normally require a subscription are making available free content (concerts, films, courses etc). The following have been sent to us:

<https://www.france.tv/spectacles-et-culture/opera-et-musique-classique/toutes-les-vidéos/>

<https://www.arte.tv/fr/arte-concert/musiques-classiques/>

<https://www.digitalconcerthall.com/en/home>

<https://openculture.com>

Do let us know if you are aware of others which chaplaincy members might like to share.

Easter recipe

Jane Quarmby has shared the following recipe for simnel cake (on a day it was snowing in Provence!)

<https://www.redonline.co.uk/food/recipes/a501121/mary-berrys-simnel-cake/>

Finally, a **message from Andrew Caspari**, Chief Operating Officer of the Diocese in Europe:

‘It is hard to focus on good news at a time like this, but as Isaiah said ‘those who lived in a land of deep darkness, on them light has shined’. At this time of the year we wait for the light to shine at Easter. In a recent Diocesan meeting, someone said ‘We don’t know when Easter will be this year’. I pondered this and concluded that what he

meant was: we don't know *when* we will celebrate together in church, but celebrate we will. Our faith is that the wilderness and the cross are followed by the resurrection and no virus can take that away.'

Amen.

With every blessing,

The Revd Jamie Johnston, Chaplain

4, rue de Belloi, 13006 Marseille
tel: +33 (0)7 66 01 71 50

email: anglican.marseille@gmail.com