

Letter from the Vicar

Saturday 22 May 2021

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This past week we saw the easing of more restrictions when, on Monday, Step 3 of the *Roadmap* came into force. Had the weather been like last year I doubt many of us would have given a second thought about eating or drinking outside but this year, with it being so wet and cold, I suspect those who have ventured out for a pub lunch or swift half have been more than grateful to be allowed to do so inside. Speaking for myself I haven't yet managed a meal out but hopefully the diary will permit in the coming days/weeks. The easing of restrictions has not entirely gone to plan with choir singing remaining one of the areas worst affected but hopefully this will be rectified/clarified very soon.

Of course it is too soon to know if the easing of restrictions is working – both to our economy and to public health. Most likely we won't know if the infection rate is increasing for another week or two but for the time being it is holding steady at roughly 5 of fewer new cases reported each day in the whole of Dacorum with one person in hospital with Covid, no-one in intensive care, and no Covid induced deaths for over a week. The mantra *Hands: Face: Space – and fresh air* seems to have stuck and people (as far as I have seen) have been sensible. This coupled with people in their 30s now able to be vaccinated has brought about a renewed confidence and hope that we are done with lockdown – although we mustn't be complacent.

In a moment of pondering, I wondered if Jesus' first disciples felt something like we do on being empowered/released to leave our homes? We are told in the Scriptures that the disciples hid in the Upper Room in fear until they received the promised gift of the Holy Spirit – the feast we celebrate tomorrow; Pentecost. Slight discrepancies in the accounts show that they didn't stay in the Upper Room for the entire time after Jesus' resurrection but rather went to Galilee to go fishing (their equivalent of shopping I suppose) but I suspect the same feeling of freedom, empowerment, re-connection was theirs as it is now ours as we re-emerge from lockdown. Being cooped-up is not much fun. Isolation is not much fun. Fear is not much fun. But at some point we, like the disciples, need to step-out in faith. I'm not advocating holding a mass rally like the first disciples but rather taking tiny-steps towards and returning to events/services/gatherings that are Covid secure. If you haven't been able to return to church yet then perhaps this could be one of your aims? All our services have plenty of capacity to welcome you back safely.

As we come to the end of Eastertide, and as restrictions are easing, I am making this my last weekly letter. I will continue to write from time to time to keep us all informed of changes and if anything notable needs to be communicated. Thank you for enduring lockdown with me and my ramblings. I hope you all remain well and, as always, I send you my love and prayers. May the love and light of the Risen Christ bring us all joy and hope in believing, for:

Alleluia! Alleluia! Christ is Risen.
He is Risen indeed. Alleluia! Alleluia”



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