



PARTNERSHIP IN PRINT



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THE OTHER NIGHT, a movie called Contagion was shown on TV. It was made in 2011, and told the story of a mysterious virus that was transmitted rapidly and caused quite sudden death in those infected. Even when the cause of the sudden rash of illnesses was discovered, there seemed to be no known cure. The movie told the story of the race to diagnose the disease and to find a cure or a vaccine for it.

The movie was apparently well received by the scientific community as a reasonable representation of what might happen in a situation like this, although some licence was taken for the sake of the story. The medical and other officials were portrayed in a very positive light, as they struggled with the situation in which they suddenly found themselves. Some took risks by injecting themselves with untested vaccines. Some took risks in keeping samples they should have destroyed, so that they could keep working on ways to help.

The same can't be said for a lot of the rest of humanity, in the movie. There was a particularly nasty 'journalist' who founded and expounded conspiracy theories, and promoted quack cures so that he could profit from the misery of others. There was widespread looting and violence, with people fighting over rations of food. Governments seemed to be unable to provide much in the way of leadership and assistance in the situation, beyond locking down the borders to their states in the USA.

It was actually a pleasure to realise that these kinds of worst fears about how we might react to a situation like this haven't been realised, at least in our communities, local and national. Beyond the initial panic buying, we seem to have proved remarkably aware that we need to respond to this as a community. Apart from the word "unprecedented" I think the next most-heard phrase is "we're all in this together". It hasn't been just a cynical sentiment espoused by tv networks, or politicians looking for relevance. It has been visible in numbers of ways across the community, not least

in the way in which the leaders from different political parties have worked together to try to keep us safe. No doubt you are aware of many other things happening in your communities, and there is a lot of work going on behind the scenes to keep people connected and to try to ensure that people don't fall through any cracks.

In the midst of all this, we have celebrated Easter, remembering that God's capacity and desire to break into the darkest moments is beyond anything we can imagine. All around us, this is being lived out in the generous and compassionate actions of our neighbours and friends in our communities. And I hope something deeper than a response this current crisis is emerging, a kind of questioning of the status quo, a sense that we needed to be reminded of the values that unite us, a desire that 'we're all in this together' will become a reality that we seek to live out as we go into the future.

Of course, it hasn't all been sweetness and light, and it would be naïve to think that we will emerge from
(continued on page 3)

C.S. Lewis 1942

Satan: "I will cause anxiety,
fear and panic.
I will shutdown
business, schools,
places of worship
and sports events.
I will cause economic turmoil".

Jesus: "I will bring together neighbours,
restore the family unit,
I will bring dinner back
to the kitchen table.
I will help people slow down their lives
and appreciate what really matters.
I will teach my children to rely on me
and not the world.
I will teach my children to trust me
and not their money and material resources."

LECTIONARY Readings Year A

Easter

The great fifty days of Easter includes eight Sundays beginning with the Easter Vigil and concluding on the Day of Pentecost. The season celebrates the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Date	Day/Season	Color	1st Reading	Psalm	2nd Reading	Gospel
3 May	Easter 4	W	Acts 2:42-47	23	1 Peter 2:19-25	John 10:1-10
10 May	Easter 5	W	Acts 7:55-60	31:1-5, 15-16	1 Peter 2:2-10	John 14:1-14
17 May	Easter 6	W	Acts 17:22-31	66:8-20	1 Peter 3:13-22	John 14:15-21
21 May	Ascension Day	W	Acts 1:1-11	47 or 93	Ephesians 1:15-23	Luke 24:44-53
24 May	Easter 7	W	Acts 1:6-14	68:1-10, 32-35	1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11	John 17:1-11
31 May	Day of Pentecost	R	Acts 2:1-21 or Numbers 11:24-30	104:24-34, 35b	1 Corinthians 12:3b-13 or Acts 2:1-21	John 20:19-23 or John 7:37-39

Colours: P – purple

W – white

G – green

R - Red

How are we to live?

In one way we think a great deal too much of the atomic bomb. "How are we to live in an atomic age?" I am tempted to reply: "Why, as you would have lived in the sixteenth century when the plague visited London almost every year, or as you would have lived in a Viking age when raiders from Scandinavia might land and cut your throat any night; or indeed, as you are already living in an age of cancer, an age of syphilis, an age of paralysis, an age of air raids, an age of railway accidents, an age of motor accidents."

In other words, do not let us begin by exaggerating the novelty of our situation. Believe me, dear sir or madam, you and all whom you love were already sentenced to death before the atomic bomb was invented: and quite a high percentage of us were going to die in unpleasant ways. We had, indeed, one very great advantage over our ancestors—anaesthetics; but we have that still. It is perfectly ridiculous to go about whimpering and drawing long faces because the scientists have added one more chance of painful and premature death to a world which already bristled with such chances and in which death itself was not a chance at all, but a certainty.

This is the first point to be made: and the first action to be taken is to pull ourselves together. If we are all going to be destroyed by an atomic bomb, let that bomb when it comes find us doing sensible and human things—praying, working, teaching, reading, listening to music, bathing the children, playing tennis, chatting to our friends over a pint and a game of darts—not huddled together like frightened sheep and thinking about bombs. They may break our bodies (a microbe can do that) but they need not dominate our minds.

— "On Living in an Atomic Age" (1948) in *Present Concerns: Journalistic Essays*. C.S. Lewis

Dear friends

This simple picture could give you a smile.

~ "Dragon" can't help himself and has claimed this beautifully soft blanket you gave Bert for Christmas. He kneads it like a mother cat and then falls asleep on it. ~

Love

From Wendy H



BOTTLING MY ANXIETY

Rohan Pryor, 2/4/2020

I spent a recent Saturday morning foraging for fruit,
and bottling my anxiety against the coming winter:
raiding lonely but laden apple trees on roadside reserves;
carefully collecting windfalls from our ancient pear tree
before greedy grubs burrow in, to spoil and multiply;
gathering hazelnuts, and wondering about the acorns.

How big will the coming storm be, and how long will its winter last?

I wonder what else can be planted now, how to feed a family,
fearful of hunger, of lack, of loss ... and yet how deeply privileged am I?
I lack nothing: biblically, my barns are full and I conspire to build more.
So many around me have so much less already,
and the sharp curves of covid19, of employment and economy
will soon escalate even further the less and the loss.

Bottling my anxiety against the storm and the winter, I pause.

Perhaps this disruption, unbidden, is a curving gift of epic proportions?
A gift of creeping calamity, already hitting hard overseas,
with a slow trickle of local cases, an occasional death. A gift, how?
In time, death comes to us all, and that tax will be paid, soon or later.
Fear of death is innate to life, yet palliation comforts not by denial,
but by the gift of care: care-full contact, even in these non-contact times.

Can I un-bottle my anxiety, and share the bounty of life instead?

Care in the face of death provides reassurance that we are held,
are seen, are known rather than alone, that death is only the end
of what we know, of what we can see from this standing place.
Yet the cosmos calls to us, beyond all we can see, calling us home,
an epic and eternal calling that moves us both forward and back,
to be undone. We each construct a life, but in time all is undone.

Undo the lid, remove the protective seals, share the fruit of life now.

'Sawubona' is the Zulu greeting *I see you*, but looking beyond sight,
sees the import and value of the other – a value not just to me,
but to others I don't even know, and to the cosmos. *I see you*,
not for what you give to me, or for what I fear you may ask,
or take; but for who you are, for who you may yet become,
and for when you too are finally undone. *I see you*.

*One day all will be undone, but for now, this day, more can be done:
more to connect, to see each other, to care. Sawubona. Shalom.*

(continued from page 1)

our imposed cocoons completely different.
The tragic events on a Melbourne freeway
this week, if nothing else, have shown us
that. But my prayer is that, as we wait to live
into the 'new normal' of life after lockdown,
we will be listening for the promptings of
the Spirit of peace and justice, of
compassionate love, of community and
hope.

How have you found this time? Has it been a
gift and blessing, or a difficult period to get
through? How might it shape your living
beyond tomorrow? Have you noticed
anything that you had previously taken for
granted? What has God been saying to you,
how have you been called into new life, by
living through this experience at this time? If
you wanted to write a few words of
reflection, we could include them
(anonymously if you like) in a future PiP or
elsewhere.

May the blessings of this time be yours,

Annette Buckley

April 2020



MEETINGS, PRAYER AND WORSHIP, CLUBS AND GROUPS

All Church services, meetings, clubs and groups are suspended at present. Please stay connected and informed about the Partnership by reading the emails that are being sent regularly by our ministry team. If you DON'T have access to email, please ensure you are connected with someone who does and can get you a printed copy. If in doubt, please contact your local congregation representative or one of our ministers - Linda, Peter, Annette or Meg. Contact details are to be found on the back page of PiP.

“Contentment is a choice” said a journalist recently in the ‘Age’, (Wendy Squires). She continued (to paraphrase)–“It’s about having faith -- in each other and the human spirit that unites us.

There is good news out there and you should actively search for it. Joy can be found everywhere and you won’t have to look too hard if you look a bit deeper as to what is going on in this extraordinary and unprecedented moment in history.’

Doing the right thing and self isolating, enabled one woman to shed the constant confliction she had experienced in her everyday life. “Just stopping and not feeling the pressure to be racing, trying to achieve everything at once means I can pick up a book and not feel guilty--
‘to be honest I am really enjoying the experience. I am definitely getting to know myself better.”

“The key lies in attitude and gratitude, seeing what you have rather than pining for what you don’t,” continued Ms Squires.

Saying that ‘these are unprecedented times’, might be true, but I have lived through the Great Depression, World War 2, the polio epidemic and the “recession we had to have.”

I am fortunate to have been sheltered from most ill effects, but can remember making sacrifices at times. Did it hurt me? No. I appreciate simple things. Neighbours were sharing Easter goodies, doing some shopping for us and even greeting us with a smile and a wave and talking, from a distance, in the street.

It makes me wonder about recent hoarding of supplies such as toilet paper, flour and so on. Human selfishness!. People were slow to ‘catch’ on about social distancing. It was hard to stay home over Easter, but the consequences of getting sick are worse.

After an extended period of isolation we will have to call on ‘inner resources’ and our initiative and to ask God to show us the way.

Submitted by Wendy

Ps 23 (NRSV)– an affirmation of faith as we shelter at home

23:1a The LORD is my shepherd,

You are my loving shepherd, and I celebrate my place in your flock, even while we are sitting apart from each other; you gather us together in love, you know us and call us by name.

23:1b I shall not want.

While around me I see panic about not having enough, I am reminded that you provide what I need; through the memory of your goodness, through the kindness of my neighbours, through your living word enfolding me.

23:2 He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters;

In this time of sheltering at home, I can enjoy the blessing of rest and the delight of immersing in stillness knowing that I am not alone, your gentle encouragement fills me, I drink deeply, until I sleep.

23:3 he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name’s sake.

You refresh me with wonder, and I notice small mercies; soft textures, rich words, melodic laughter, sweet sounds. You direct my thinking and walking, my working and talking so that I might bring a blessing in your name.

23:4 Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff-- they comfort me.

Even when I am afraid and lonely, at the end of my coping, you are with me, steadying my breathing, bringing me back, reminding me of your strength beside me.



Continued on next page

23:5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

*You lay out a feast of goodness when I open my eyes to see it, dismissing the doubters with your abundance.
You bless me with generous, gurgling grace and I can't hold it all within me.
It spills out, flowing to others, drenching them in delight.*

23:6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long

*Bless whatever happens in my shadow, each day, while I keep my face to the light.
Living in your household I am recognised, loved, and held, each moment and for ever. Amen*

Jennie Gordon, March 2020 – permission granted to use freely.

THE 20-SECOND GIFT OF WASHING YOUR HANDS

Kara K Root 12 March 2020

Wash your hands for 20 seconds.

Never has 20 seconds felt so long in my entire life.

I'm trying to follow the CDC's advice for avoiding the new coronavirus. I count as I wash my hands: "One, two, three, four..." My normal hand-washing time is apparently somewhere around eight seconds. After eight seconds, I feel finished. "...nine, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15..." I resent each additional second. Each one feels long and annoying. Twenty seconds is an eternity! It's making me cranky.

The soap is gone because I've kept my hands under the water. I have to get more soap. I think about how much water I'm wasting. A tip I hear to avoid the counting: Wash your hands for two rounds of "Happy Birthday." I try this ONE time. I hate it SO much. I don't want "Happy birthday to you" in my head that many times a day. It's bad enough at actual birthdays. That 20 seconds of hand washing, several times a day, is an excellent opportunity to stop and soak in resentment. It's a marvellous forced pause to wallow in grouchy irritability and anxiety. To keep myself from ending early, cutting it to 12 seconds, or 14, I take to ruminating on the spread of the virus. I wonder how many more people have gotten it so far. My husband walked in the door and said, "Hey, did you know 20 seconds is the Lord's Prayer? It's one Our Father." Suddenly, the whole thing blew open...

...Now I see that each time I wash my hands, I'm offered a chance to slow down and be present with God. I'm offered a moment in which to stand still and breathe and come back into myself.

Head, heart, body, right here, with God. How many opportunities throughout my day do I now have to pause and be reoriented? Suddenly, this task, this frustrating requirement, becomes a gift.

I turn on the faucet. I listen to the sound of the water. I breathe. I wet my hands and squirt soap into my palm. I am aware of my hands and how they've changed, aged. They look just like my mother's when I was young. She was once just the age I am now.

I begin. "Our Father, who art in heaven ..." I feel the strength in my fingers, the flexibility, the sensitivity to touch and sensation. My hands do so much, and I take them for granted. Thank you, hands. Thank you, God, for my hands.

"Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." Around this point, my hands begin to feel sudsy, velvety and a little tickly, as if wrapped in a soft blanket. It's a pleasant sensation. I let myself enjoy it. How full life is of these small sensations! These little, unnoticed blessings of being embodied creatures!

"Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." My mind unclenches a little. It snaps to the phone call I've been replaying in my head for weeks. I feel the tension in my throat and the tender, wounded anger I've been nursing -- let's face it, cherishing. I think about the tone in her voice, the dismissive way she treated me. It rises up and balloons in my chest as it has in the car, in the bed, in the shower -- anytime I am still long enough for it to catch up and invade me again.

But this time, I face it squarely. "Forgive us ..." -- "Forgive me ... as I forgive ..." It breaks apart a little, dissipates. She doesn't know me. I don't need her to understand me. We are both doing our best with our days, with our lives. Beloved children of God, both of us. All of us. Maybe I can let this go. Maybe I can wash my hands of it and let it go.

"For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever." The water is warm. I rinse off the soap. In just 20 seconds, my hands feel clean, and my mind and heart feel renewed.

"Amen."

To read more: <https://faithandleadership.com/kara-k-root-20-second-gift-washing-your-hands>

Mia-Mia Wins the Premiership.

Mia-Mia cricket club has had a tremendously successful year finishing the season two games clear atop the ladder at the end of the home & away season with many contributors, hard work and strong team performances in every match we've played. A stellar come



from behind win in the semi-final earnt us the right to play in our second successive Grand Final against the challengers Strathfieldsaye.

The news came thru "the Wire" at Thursday training night that due to the Corona Virus the Grand Final would be cancelled and the premiership, as is protocol in these situations, would be awarded to the club finishing higher on the ladder, Mia Mia cricket club. The premiership marks 20 years since the last silverware graced our club, safe to say we didn't think it would finish this way, and we'd like to thank all those who supported us throughout the year and indeed since our resurrection in 2014.

We look forward to continuing to grow both on and off the field of play in the coming years, whether as players, supporters, coaches, administrators, grounds men, scorers, managers, umpires, we welcome all-comers to enjoy the opportunity to participate in our small community focused club.

Brian Lauder & Will Ryan

Prayer for a Pandemic

May we who are merely inconvenienced
Remember those whose lives are at stake.

May we who have no risk factors
Remember those most vulnerable.

May we who have the luxury of working from home
Remember those who must choose between preserving their health or making their rent.

May we who have the flexibility to care for our children when their schools close
Remember those who have no options.

May we who have to cancel our trips
Remember those that have no safe place to go.

May we who are losing our margin money in the tumult of the economic market
Remember those who have no margin at all.

May we who settle in for a quarantine at home
Remember those who have no home.

As fear grips our country,
let us choose love.

During this time when we cannot physically wrap our arms around each other,
Let us yet find ways to be the loving embrace of God to our neighbors.

Amen.

~by Cameron Bellm (Krug the Thinker)~

Address label

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