

HALAS reflection for April 1st 2020

Psalm 55, 124, 34

Exodus 9:1-12

Hebrews 12:3-13

Nearly two weeks on, and those seemingly, 'can't do without everyday essentials', thought to be lost for ever, are once again rolling back onto our supermarket shelves. A glimmer of hope, received in a friend's text this morning.

Hope, in the shadows of our present predicament, reflecting the efforts of all those working to bring us encouragement, in what might otherwise feel like a period of hopelessness.

Like Job we long to have, 'life return to the way it was' but perhaps we are in a period of 'learning and growth'. A time to let go, a period of transformation, preparing us for changes which might have to come to pass, when we eventually return to our once familiar routines. Some changes may be welcomed, some may not.

Already we are seeing neighbours and strangers reaching out to each other, lost friends reunited, families reconciling their differences, the love of God reaching out. WhatsApp and Facebook now 'forging links in a new chain of life' connecting communities and providing lifelines.

We have no idea how long this unsettled period in our lives is going to last, uncertainty that can often become a breeding ground for fear.

Psalm 55 from our readings for today, is a pouring out of a heart in distress and anger from one who is restless, alarmed and shuddering with the fear of death and panic. It is a psalm overflowing with emotions. Emotions which we may already have inhabited or come to visit in the days ahead.

Whilst our circumstances are very different to those of David, the triggers in our lives at the moment are giving rise to similar responses.

O, that we could cling to the wings of a dove to fly far off, to escape the pain, to be in a different place, in a different time, far from this strife.

Though overwhelmed by his fear and distress, David takes hold of an opportunity and turns to prayer. Urgent prayer to the Lord, in the evening, in the morning and at noon.

He pleads with the Lord to hear and heed his request; he voices his alarm and fears.

Early Christians saw the sufferings mirrored in the Psalms as foreshadowing the cross, where Jesus fearing the 'cup of suffering' entrusts his fate to God.

This Passiontide, as we stumble through the shadows, reaching out to the hope of the cross, putting our trust in God, we can be assured that he will sustain us.

Rest a while now, on the wings of 'The Dove', let yourself be carried to a place of peace, listen to that still small voice.

Be still and know that I am God.

I am the God who healeth thee.

In thee, O Lord I put my trust.