

Dear Friends

This may hopefully be the last of these emails I send. I want to say an enormous **THANK YOU** to the Churchwardens who have distributed them through their local church distribution email lists to all of you at home over the four months of lockdown. I simply could not have managed without your constant help, and I'm personally very grateful, as I'm sure are the recipients. Involving the local Wardens, rather than having an anonymous central list, has been intended to keep things at a more local, relational level, and I'm indebted to the Wardens for keeping going through this awful crisis.

Thank you at home for all the encouraging feedback that has come back to me. I'm so grateful to God that He's been able to reach you and feed you through these difficult times by means of this mailing, as well as the myriad other resources that have become available through lockdown. For those who it didn't reach, or help, I can only apologise, but I take comfort in the fact that the Body of Christ is manifested in millions of ways between the local and the worldwide, and God is not either restricted or constrained by our geography, except of course when the divisions work against His plan to bring all of creation together in worship.

All of us who follow Christ are called to share what we have been given so He can multiply this for the good of the many outside our group, church or parish. As we say, "all that we have is yours, and of your own do we give you."

For those who can't, or don't feel comfortable gathering in a church building, or those who'd like more to explore at home, here's a last act of worship for us to engage in.

As always, basic engagement is looking at the pictures.

Next stage, look at a video or two.

Next, read one or more of the bible readings.

Next, read my comments and thoughts, etc.

The more you engage, the more God can bless you, and more Glory you can give to God!

Worship is like the bread and fish the little boy surrenders to Jesus: you give what you have, and God multiplies it a thousand times. Keep it to yourself, and that's all you've got!

If you only look at one video, do look at Corrine May's *Five Loaves and Two Fish*, after the *Thought for the Week...*

The lack of communion is an ongoing issue for many, and with the introduction of the need for face-coverings last week has become even more difficult. The guidance specifically instructs that face coverings should only be removed for receiving the bread, which should be done in 2m socially distanced queues, standing. Hands should be sanitised with antiseptic gel before and after taking the mask off, and before and after re-fitting it. People should avoid touching pew ends on the way up and back in a one-way system. This makes for a very complicated procedure, difficult to carry out, and difficult to monitor. I'm asking each PCC to determine whether they're able safely to carry this procedure out before we can share the bread in communion.

The CofE Guidance can be found here: [https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/COVID-19\\_Advice\\_on\\_the\\_Administration\\_of\\_Holy\\_Communion\\_v4.1\\_0.pdf](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/COVID-19_Advice_on_the_Administration_of_Holy_Communion_v4.1_0.pdf)

One of the interesting sections describes different forms of communion in these straightened times:

"Celebrating the Eucharist is literally synonymous with *giving thanks* (Gk: *eucharisteo*) for the suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ and the benefits that the Cross has afforded us.

Many will grieve the physical absence of the sacrament from their lives. Yet this time may be an opportunity to re-discover and recognise some of the other ways in which we participate in the paschal mystery:

in the practice of reading and learning the Scriptures,

in joining in the Daily Office as an expression of the prayer of the Church universal,

in praying for the transformation of the world,

in living out the Great Commission Jesus gave us,

and in our own lives continually"

I was very touched by a comment on another of the videos I've suggested for this week's worship. It says this:

"I've been born again at age of 60. Going through divorce did it for me.

I am so in love with Jesus. I don't deserve the amount of Grace he gives. I now love people like He does. Jesus is so beautiful. Amazing! I exalt thee o Lord. I exalt thee. I love you!"

Can you identify which video? Surrendering to Jesus aged 60 is quite a thing, but it shows how giving to Him what we have can lead to such transformation.

PCCs are doing their utmost to provide safety, but individuals must accept that gathering for worship is at your own risk. Please do not feel shy of refusing to engage in any activity with which you do not feel at ease. That said, the churches that have gathered so far have really enjoyed being back together, even if socially distanced!

Five of our peninsula churches will be open this coming Sunday for worship: Finsthwaite, Haverthwaite, Staveley, Field Broughton and Allithwaite. Flookburgh and Grange PCCs have decided it's wise for them to wait until September.

As I mentioned last week, I've provisionally booked a Confirmation service with Bishop James for Sunday October 18th at Haverthwaite. We have five candidates from the Benefice that have initiated this: if anyone else is interested to explore confirmation, please get in touch.

I'm going to take a much needed period of annual leave from August 3rd, taking in Sundays August 9, 16 & 23. During this time, any church emergencies can be referred to John Dixon, Rural Dean, or Vernon Ross, Archdeacon.

## **Have a great August, and be safe!**

God bless us as we trust Christ to transform us, our churches and our communities

Jim

Revd Dr James Bruce

**Transitional Rector Cartmel Peninsula Benefice**

Allithwaite; Cartmel; Finsthwaite; Flookburgh;

Field Broughton; Grange over Sands; Grange Fell;

Haverthwaite; Staveley-in-Cartmel.

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Day Off: Friday

I try to process emails Tues, Thurs, Sat.

### ***Jesus said, "Follow me!"***

*Being a Christian, a companion of Jesus, being in the Kingdom of God, born again, are all about saying "yes" to Jesus' invitation to follow him in the flow of God's beautiful created order.*

*We first say this "yes" when we realise he's inviting us to "turn around and come with me," and decide to put our trust in Him, to identify as His follower. He promises to fill us with His own Spirit, making us children of His Father, when we do this.*