

11<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Dear Friends,

Here we are at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of advent, by some miracle I have done all of my Christmas shopping and simply need to get a few things posted out, maybe because we haven't had the usual rush of Christmas activities, my diary states that there should be an afternoon tea with a silver band playing, obviously that is not going to happen this year! Many things won't, and I feel like I am beginning to sound like a broken record (and yes that dates me), as I say that yet again.

So, as always, I wonder how you are, I wonder what is going on in life for you? I received a gift today, an unusual one admittedly as that gift was a shot in the arm, a flu jab, it is the first time I have received one, but it felt right to do so especially as it was offered, and it was free, what an amazing gift the NHS is! Of course, free gifts are part of our story as the people of God aren't they, that that creator of all that is should choose to become enveloped in human flesh and be contained in it remains an eternal mystery, one that we rightly look forward to celebrating over and over again.

I am still following the Celtic Advent journey that began on the 15<sup>th</sup> November, and I am really appreciating the gift of this season. It began with a focus on Jesus, God made flesh, Immanuel, God with us, and moved on to focusing on the Christ who makes a home in and among us 10 days later, yesterday brought a new focus, on the Christ who is to come, the one who having made the way will come to make all things new!

There will be a time when tears are wiped away, when there will be no more sickness, pain or dying, such a startling hope in these days of global pandemic! As the people of God we are called not merely to hang onto that hope, but to begin to live into it, how do we do that? The answer is that there are so many ways, one of them of course is to fight for/ campaign for justice. Towards the beginning of my letter I spoke of the gift of receiving a flu jab, and I hope very much to be invited at some point to receive the Pfizer vaccine, and that is looking likely for me, but for many others in different parts of the world that will not be the case because the richer nations have bought up the available stock. Global justice now state that ; ....***without pressure on the pharmaceutical companies, there simply won't be enough supplies for all countries and the poorest countries could have to wait until 2024 before they get any vaccines!*** Surely that is not right.

Maybe you could write to your MP, and call on the UK government to ensure that any vaccine developed with public money is made affordable and available to all. And urge them to work globally so that any vaccine reaches the most vulnerable everywhere! Surely we need to tune our voices to the one calling out in the desert, and become those who testify to the coming light who was, is and will be a light for all nations!

Our Gospel reading this week points forward again, challenging us to be signs of hope for the day that will come:

***There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.***

***This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, 'I am not the Messiah.' And they asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?' He said, 'I am not.' 'Are you the prophet?' He answered, 'No.' Then they said to him, 'Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?' He said, 'I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord" ', as the prophet Isaiah said.***

***Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, 'Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?' John answered them, 'I baptize with water. Among you stands one***

*whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.' This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.*

*John 1: 6-8 and 19-28*

Of course once again I have only shared one way in which you might hold the light for others and work for justice, and there are so many more, many of them very creative and innovative, and maybe it is all about how we respond to the move of the Spirit and the heart beat of the divine at work in and through us. I leave you with a prayer/ poem:

*In the chaos,  
the confusion,  
the darkness  
of despair,  
we cling to hope,  
crying out,  
make a way,  
make a way,  
but let it be your way,  
your way of peace  
of joy,  
of order  
and light,  
we need your way  
your way  
in our ways,  
woven through our days,  
your love to cast out fear,  
your streams flowing  
in the desert,  
your breath blowing  
through the dullness  
of our hearts,  
your music to invite us to dance  
in the unforced rhythms  
of your heart beat...  
make a way,  
draw us, make a way  
for us...  
where we see no way  
come make a way..*

*(Sally Coleman December 2020)*

We cry out, make a way, but let it be your way loving God. So this week as we continue our advent journey I pray that you will find blessings in the darkness, blessings for the journey, and peace within and without. As always if you would like to talk to me please call.



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