



NEWSLETTER

Sunday 19 April - 2nd Sunday of Easter

Acts 2.14a, 22-32; John 20.19-end



Worshipping Together This Week



Nick Bird will be recording worship for this Sunday, which will be shared on the **St Nicks YouTube channel** www.youtube.com/channel/UC_10sXmB7N5CKsD60_eRXjg. Meanwhile, do continue to use service of Compline (Night Prayer) for the Easter season, and other resources already shared there. Why not subscribe to the channel and be alerted when new material is added!

Find other worship resources at stnicholasdunnington.org.uk/covid19/worship/

The churches are closed until further notice, both for public worship and private prayer.



What virus are you spreading?

by Revd Dave Bookless, Director of Theology for [A Rocha International](https://www.rocha.org/)

first published 20 March 2020



As the COVID-19 coronavirus makes its relentless way across the world, it is not the only thing that is going viral. Fear, panic-buying, stock-market slumps, and fake news stories are also infectiously spreading like viruses, making the situation so much worse. In this context, I want to ask two key questions:

1. What can we learn about ourselves, our societies, and our planet from this crisis?
2. Are there positives that we can aim to spread virally, overcoming the harmful infections?

In terms of what we can learn:

We're all in this together: COVID-19 powerfully illustrates how interconnected our global village is. Both the actual virus and the virtual viruses of fear and economic panic have spread so fast because we (especially the affluent minority) are both physically hyper-mobile and permanently connected online. The biodiversity and climate crises are also global, interlinked and will affect us all, perhaps more slowly and unevenly than COVID-19, but eventually with far more devastating consequences. We can only tackle them effectively by joined-up global policies and strategies.

People are capable of bad and good extremes! [The head of the WHO has observed](#) that 'Outbreaks can bring out the best and the worst in people', from caring for neighbours to selfishly hoarding food and toilet rolls. When faced with a global crisis we can't simply appeal to people's better nature; we need decisive and united leadership to normalize behavioural change.

The wellbeing of people and planet come before economic growth: the relentless growth of global industry, trade and consumerism have almost stopped. This has brought instability, pain and anxiety to many, as the global market has ground to a halt. Yet the market not only failed to anticipate or deal with this crisis, it led to it spreading rapidly and globally. However, with factories closed and planes grounded, polluted skies are clearing, CO₂ and particulate levels dropping, [birdsong is heard again in Wuhan](#), and [wildlife is returning to the tourist-free canals of Venice](#). We are being given an opportunity to re-envision the relationship between people, planet and economy. We need a healthy economy that puts people's health and the thriving of nature first.

We rely on healthy ecosystems: the science is still uncertain but it appears COVID-19 may have jumped species as a result of the illegal wildlife trade. The virus [resembles those found in pangolins, the most illegally-traded species](#), and [bats](#). We mess with nature at our peril, and pathogens are crossing species more regularly. [A Guardian article observed](#), 'a number of researchers today think that it is actually humanity's destruction of biodiversity that creates the conditions for new viruses and diseases such as COVID-19 ... to arise – with profound health and economic impacts in rich and poor countries alike.'

Money can be found, and people can change their habits, when faced with a crisis: As a friend wrote: 'The global response to the pandemic has already demonstrated that when suitably motivated, we can change behaviour dramatically, and quickly. Yes, there will be huge economic impact – but we can survive with less travel, more home working, less consumerism and consumption. And because we've actually done it rather than modelled it, there is actual data available to demonstrate the impact.' Once we're through this terrible pandemic, can we preserve the best of tele-conferencing, virtual meetings, more time for relationships with neighbours, the elderly and with nature?

So, if there's much we can learn from the suffering and limits imposed by COVID-19, how can we virally encourage the positives? At the risk of being simplistic, the bible speaks of the three virtues of **faith, hope and love** ([1 Corinthians 13:13](#)), or [as The Message puts it](#), 'Trust steadily in God, hope unswervingly, love extravagantly.' I sense that these three virtue-viruses will be needed not only as we face COVID-19 and its consequences, but also as we face further disruptions and necessary changes to address climate change and biodiversity loss.

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Our **faith** is in God, who is 'our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble' ([Psalm 46:1](#)). That doesn't mean we won't catch the virus or suffer economically, but it means God comes alongside us and all who are wounded and broken, human and nonhuman, in compassion and renewal. It doesn't mean we won't feel frightened, but it gives us a wider perspective that nothing can separate us from the love of God ([Romans 8:38-39](#)).



Hope enables us to face uncertainty, because it is rooted in who God is, not what's happening around us. I was deeply moved last week speaking to a relative in her 90s who said 'What's the worst that could happen?' She went on to say that she wasn't afraid of death because of her hope of eternal life with Christ. That hope extends to God's good purposes for the whole created order, which, despite the calamitous and blasphemous ways we mistreat it, is longing to be set free from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom of God's children (Romans 8:21).

Finally, **love**, which St Paul reminds us is the greatest of the three. There are wonderful stories of viral love for neighbour emerging amidst the tragedy of coronavirus. Bono was even inspired to write a new song '[Let your love be known](#)' as he heard of Italians singing across rooftops from their locked-down homes. As many of us are forced to slow down and live indoors, we can also look out and, as a self-isolating friend wrote, 'Perhaps in the regenerative wonder of nature (trashed by human misuse though it is), we can experience something of a spiritual regeneration in ourselves and our relationship with God.'

So, what virus are you spreading? Whilst the world goes crazy, many face lockdown, and many are suffering, let's resolve to deepen our exposure to faith, hope and love, and to share them as virally as we can.

A Reflection on John 20 v.19 to the end

shared by Judith Hewitt

One of the books I turn to when looking at the Gospel reading for any Sunday is '[Gazing on the Gospel](#)' by Judith Dimond. She suggests for each Sunday that we Gaze, Consider and Contemplate on the reading. So, let's start to do that with Sunday's Gospel, which is very appropriate for this time of 'lock down'.

Gaze. We are gazing here on a locked door, the 'keys' are nearby. The door of the house is locked because the disciples are afraid, afraid for their lives and for their future. I am sure we can all identify with the disciples as many of us are afraid at the moment. We feel locked in.

Consider. Keys are needed to unlock any door, to our homes, to our cars, to outbuildings. Jesus was trapped, locked into his tomb for three days but no key was needed to unlock the tomb.

Contemplate. At the moment we feel locked into our homes and our gardens and for many it is a strange feeling, but let us contemplate how we might unlock our hearts to let Jesus who loves us all so much to come in and give us the comfort and peace he freely gives.

Let us pray

Risen Lord help us to unlock our hearts to you.

We pray for all who are finding this a difficult time, help them to know your love and peace.

In Christ's name we pray.

Amen

News and Notices

Sunday Worship. BBC local radio are broadcasting a service every Sunday morning at 8.00am. Our local radio station is Radio York 103.7. There is also a service on BBC1 about 11.00, check your tv magazine as the time varies and can start early! And don't forget the services and reflections Nick Bird is sharing regularly on the St Nicks YouTube channel www.youtube.com/channel/UC_10sXmB7N5CKsD60_eRXjg

Methodist worship resources for use at home. A number of resources for worship this week are available to download from our website: <https://www.yorkmethodist.org.uk/coronavirus-information.html> along with a list of livestreamed services and video reflections you can 'tune in' for.

Live stream services. The Diocese of York Facebook page, has a list (with links) to services broadcast from around our Diocese. www.facebook.com/pg/DioceseOfYork/events/

The Grapevine. There will not be a printed edition of the Grapevine for May, as we don't want to put any of our subscribers or volunteer deliverers at unnecessary risk. However, there will be an electronic version on the St Nicks website. Link to follow in next week's newsletter.



Lectionary Corner at St Nicholas

21 April: Anselm, Abbot of Le Bec, Archbishop of Canterbury, Teacher of the Faith, 1109

23 April: George, Patron of England c.304

25 April: Mark, the Evangelist



Do you need practical support or a friendly chat?

If you need help/support but don't know who your local Community Support Group volunteers are, please email covid19east york@gmail.com, or call Rev Nick Bird on 01904 489349 and we will link you up.

Would you like to receive this newsletter by email? Contact Victoria on grapevine.rey@gmail.com. It is also available to download from the St Nicholas Church website at www.stnicholasdunnington.org.uk/news/

Next newsletter on **Sunday 26 April**. Items to grapevine.rey@gmail.com by **9.00 am on Thursday 23 April**