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Dear Friends,

Covid-19 restrictions are beginning to be eased, and that may be generating all kinds of emotions within each of us. Identifying and naming our feelings helps us to understand the impacts they have upon us. We may be more able to address our anxieties and fears if we understand their source, more able to experience joy if we know its cause.

As we see in this week's reflection, Jesus helps us to see reality for what it is, and reveals that which may otherwise remain hidden. During this season of "Thy Kingdom Come", my prayer is that not only will Jesus help us to see and cope with reality, but that His reality as the Risen, Redeeming, Living Word will be experienced by me, and by my friends and neighbours.

"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done".

This comes with my love and prayers

Claire, on behalf of the wider Arthur Rank Centre team

Weekly reflection

Bible Reading: John 3:31-36

New Living Translation (NLT) **31** "He has come from above and is greater than anyone else. We are of the earth, and we speak of earthly things, but he has come from heaven and is greater than anyone else.[a] **32** He testifies about what he has seen and heard, but how few believe what he tells them! **33** Anyone who accepts his testimony can affirm that God is true. **34** For he is sent by God. He speaks God's words, for God gives him the Spirit without limit. **35** The Father loves his Son and has put everything into his hands. **36** And anyone who believes in God's Son has eternal life. Anyone who doesn't obey the Son will never experience eternal life but remains under God's angry judgment."

Reflection

Apocalyptic evangelism

When news of the coronavirus started breaking and governments across the world took drastic measures to lockdown people's movements there was much talk, in some quarters, about this being apocalyptic. It seems that apocalypse is a word that contemporary culture can't use without attaching the noun Zombie to it. Perhaps we have some suspicion around such a word being linked to conspiracy theories, end times fanatics and crazy readings of Revelation.

Yet the apocalyptic is all about unveiling, revealing and exposing things as they actually are. In that sense Jesus' ministry was apocalyptic. Everything Jesus said and did broke open situations, lives, hearts and minds exposing the truth. He helped reveal the powers that be and the grace that can be found. His ministry brought him into conflict with institutional and religious power masquerading as godliness.

In the passage from today's reading John the Baptist is speaking about Jesus. He has clearly had an apocalyptic experience of the Christ. In fact, the words recorded coming from John's mouth sound like Jesus talking about himself in other parts of John's gospel. Indeed, this passage is utterly confessional for John sees Jesus for who He truly is. I get the impression that in these days of isolation, enforced reflection and inward consideration the Spirit is cracking open more hearts and minds than we may realise.

Over the past few weeks I've been able to have a series of conversations with a neighbour (all social distancing observed) about faith, scripture and the person of Jesus. Coronavirus time has cracked open an opportunity to slow down and reconsider. My neighbour like many has had to move his sustainable energy business to working from home. He has been talking about how this time has been a gift. A gift to reconsider what is important – to investigate things of faith. He is reading through Mark's gospel for the first time since school and using a series of morning prayers from a Celtic benediction book I have given him. A few days ago, he said, 'These prayers are the words I've been longing to say but didn't know how. I'm excited.' I sense that if we are ready and watching how the Spirit is at work, we may see the deep things He is doing.

Prayer - Collect from Thy Kingdom Come

Almighty God,
your ascended Son has sent us into the world to preach the good news of your kingdom:
inspire us with your Spirit and fill our hearts with the fire of your love,
that all who hear your Word may be drawn to you,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Response

This week we are in the middle of the 10 days of prayer set aside between Ascension Day and Pentecost. Thy Kingdom Come would normally culminate with churches across the country coming together in prayer but also celebrating with beacon events in Cathedrals and public spaces. Last year I joined in with the celebrations in Trafalgar Square. Of course, things are different this year but why not access some of the [resources on the website](#). Although I come from an evangelical background, I've really enjoyed using the Journey with Mary materials written by the Catholic Bishops Conference and produced by TKC. I'm praying for my friend in the village to have a deeper insight and revelation of who Jesus is...just like John the Baptist. Why don't you consider who you are connected to in your village or town and start praying for them and looking for the apocalyptic in our midst.

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