

Dear Friends

In my last pastoral letter I wrote briefly about how, as a chaplain, I began conversations with patients in hospital. Since then I've had a brief, and totally unexpected, few days in hospital as a patient. In three of my fellow-patients...let's call them Jimmy, Johnny and Frank...I saw a microcosm of our 21st century world.

On one occasion Johnny was literally trying to climb up the wall. So many throughout the world are metaphorically, if not literally, climbing up the wall after months of lockdown, social distancing, mask wearing and so on. I am reminded that in Jesus' day there were many folk, like the lepers and the woman with haemorrhage, who had to keep their distance, who were unable to be properly part of the communities in which they lived. And I remember too that it was Jesus who not only healed them but also restored them to their families and friends.

Jimmy demanded constant attention and if he didn't get it he would create a diversion. In today's world there are so many voices that clamour for our attention, on the TV, radio and the multiplicity of social media platforms. Again, I am reminded that so many folk clamoured for Jesus' attention that he had to deliberately and intentionally find time to be alone with his disciples and to pray.

Frank lived in his own confused and confusing world. The former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, said: 'We live in a messy world...' Our post-Brexit world, ridden with covid-19, facing the immense problems of climate change is indeed messy, confused and confusing just like the 1st century world of Palestine, where power-hungry men vied for control just as they do today. And we remember that Jesus said 'Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth.'

In spite of all the above I'm encouraged by some words by the Revd.Dr. Stephen Dawes, former Chair of the Cornwall District and Canon Theologian of Truro Cathedral:

'I believe in Jesus Christ, who is the best clue there is to God, and whose life and teaching are the clearest guide there is to the meaning of life, the universe and everything.'

Finally, the beautiful words of an ancient prayer:

Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord;
and by thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night;
for the love of thy only Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Blessings
Allan