

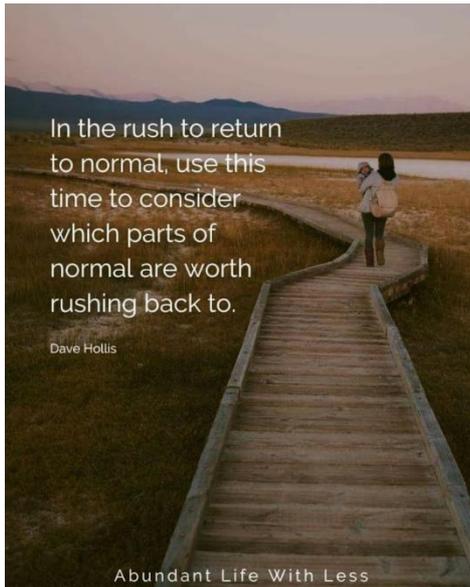
THOUGHT FOR THE DAY during May– 'LOCKDOWN 1' 2020

May 4th - A Blessing for the country

Rather than a thought for the day today I thought I would share this video with you - you may have seen it already; it's a selection of singers from many churches singing a blessing for the country. It is one of my favourite blessings as it has the lovely image of God's face shining upon us.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=6&v=PUtI3mNj5U&feature=emb_logo

6th May 2020



I was talking to some fellow vicars today and one said about lockdown, 'I haven't reached my inner zen yet'. Many people have mentioned that this isolation is good to review your life. I know not everyone feels this way but maybe in some quiet moments you can review what is really important to you.

I was reminded of this verse from the book of Ecclesiastes in the Bible where we are encouraged not to make rash promises but to consider carefully.

As you enter the Temple, keep your ears open and your mouth shut! Don't be a fool who doesn't even realize it is sinful to make rash promises to God, for he is in heaven and you are only here on earth, so let your words be few.

May 11th – Another blank page

I just looked in my diary for today May 11th....another blank page! Monday is usually my busiest, longest workday, but not today! If it had been a last minute cancelled plan, a day off for a bank holiday I would have been so delighted. I would have filled it with so much...caught up on jobs, seen the family, indulged in day time television (if the weather was bad)... gone out for coffee. But not today! Another blank page when I get to choose what to do, not dictated to by deadlines or the expectations of others. Why is it so hard? And why am I so exhausted and so unmotivated?

The writer of Ecclesiastes says, *"there is a time for for everything."* Really I ask? Is there a time to be grumpy, frustrated, exhausted by lack of activity; bored but not wanting to do anything; irritated when you know in your head you are truly blessed and should be grateful.

Last week Des talked about Jesus being the Good Shepherd so I must be a sheep...needing all that the shepherd offers a sheep. Matthew says, "When Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd."

I think looking at my diary's blank page, in my sheepness, I wandered off and lost sight of the shepherd. But it's okay - he hasn't forgotten about his errant sheep...here he is...looking for me. - Liz

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May 14th 2020 – Easter lillies

This thought for the day comes from Sheila - it was written on Good Friday. I am posting it today, the day of Doreen's funeral. She longed to be with her husband Franz again. We are still in Easter season and it is good to remember that no matter what, God is with us through Christ.



Good Friday afternoon is usually when Janet and I arrange the Easter lilies in church. Each lily stem in memory of someone special who has died; there were 82 last year. The church is quiet - almost resting from the activity of Holy Week and before the joyous celebration of Easter Day. This year there are no lilies, but the names of those special people we commemorated last year are on the altar. Many of us will be adding to those names in our hearts. Instead of elegant and stately lilies, I put some tiny, delicate wild violets with them - very different but no less beautiful. I'm reminded of a quotation: "Beautiful times be-

come no less so, simply because they have ended." And so it is, with our loved ones then and now. The Easter story assures us that even more beautiful times await.

The silence of Good Friday is soon replaced with the exuberance of Easter Day. On Sunday we will hear again, in a very different way from usual, the message which tells us that life continues in some mysterious way; death is defeated; Christ has the victory; God is with us. Always.

May 18th

This thought for the day comes from Sheila

There's so much we're missing at the moment but, for many, if not most, I expect the worst aspect is not being able to be with our family and friends. Video calls are a great boon, but no substitute for literally holding people close, especially grandchildren/grandparents. Years ago, in a very difficult time, I came across a Celtic night prayer which I used every night before I slept and it summed up everything I really wanted from God during that period. Saying it every night (it is very easy to memorise) as the last thing I did was very calming and reassuring. You might want to adopt it as your prayer before sleep while you are separated from the people you love most.

A Prayer in Time of Darkness

All that I love
into your keeping.
All that I care for
into your care.
Be with us by day,
be with us by night;
and as dark closes
the eyelids with sleep
may I waken
to the peace of a new day.



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May 27th – Love our Neighbour

Our thought for the day comes from Liz today - It raises some interesting questions about social distancing and unconditional love - Normally we show love by being close... but now we show love by distancing - What new ways can we find to love our neighbour as the story of the Good Samaritan espouses?

On my walk today I reflected on all those I socially isolated from by stepping aside:

Who were they?

What was going on in their lives?

Who were they speaking to on their mobile phone?

Who were they going home to, or were they home alone?

Was anyone ill in their family?

Had anyone died in their family?

Were they struggling?

How were they coping?

Jesus said to the expert, the professional: “love with everything”

I am no expert but I am a sort of professional....

But today, I passed by on the other side,
again.