

LOCKDOWN EIGHT WEEKS ON

I was asked a while back, on how I felt the Lockdown was affecting me spiritually. It was in the early days, late March, and now here we are in the middle of May. In some ways I feel much as I did then, but perhaps in other ways, not. Back in March I felt that one of the good things about Lockdown was that I had the luxury of more time for reflection, reading and prayer. And I still believe this to be the case, though I might not always be making the best use of this time, this long Sabbath, given to us. Somehow things, the day to day bits of our lives like getting out of bed, taking a shower, eating, doing the washing up, seem to have “expanded” and seem to take more time too. I get up later, prayer doesn't have to be at a particular time after all, does it? I could say it should, but if it stops us praying “whenever” or constantly as well, maybe not.

I have also noticed a slightly disconcerting tendency to put things off, for instance “I really don't need to write this post today, there's always tomorrow”...because there's always tomorrow and there's nothing much in the diary, or the next day, or the next, and so on.

Speaking of praying, maybe we are all doing it, hopefully rather more often than before, maybe more randomly, perhaps more instinctively. The important thing to remember is there's no right or wrong way of doing it. Some may fall into prayer mode as they take exercise, looking at the houses, people, shops, businesses, clubs, social places, schools, health support, and so forth. We may lift all this up to God who will know of all the needs here, the joyful and the sad, the worried and the confident. We can expand this beyond our communities and hold up others, the NHS, carers, essential workers and many more. Others may pray as they carry out routine home tasks, or as they sit, perhaps watching TV, which can act as a trigger for prayer. And sometimes the song of a bird, the sight of a beautiful flower or butterfly may help us to rejoice in God's good Creation and give us a chance to praise Him for it.

Perhaps, especially if we are sharing our space with someone else, we may find a place where we pray. I know at least one person who goes off to his garden shed, while others will sit in a particular place, light a candle, look at a picture, or sit in the garden. The choice is really limitless, and it's good to see what works for you. There is always the option to use a more structured approach, a simple Daily Office maybe, or offering the Lord's Prayer, using each line as a springboard for free prayer. However we offer prayer, God is ready to hear us. Use this time and space to spend time in the presence of our loving God.

You might be interested to use this short Celtic Prayer for the start of a new day:-

*I arise today through a mighty strength:
God's power to guide me, God's might to uphold me,
God's eyes to watch over me, God's word to give me speech,
God's hand to guard me, God's way to lie before me,
God's shield to shelter me, God's host to secure me.
Amen*

Of course there's no reason why you can't change “me” to us, if you wish.

In Christ's love Alice