

NATIONAL DAY OF REFLECTION 23 MARCH 2021

Today, marks a grim anniversary, that of the start of the first lockdown here in the UK due to Covid-19. Quite what we were expecting then is possibly very different from how events have played out. Rather naively perhaps, like many others, I supposed that this lockdown would do it...and we'd all be back to some sort of normality within 12 weeks. We would celebrate Easter, even if it was a few weeks late. And we'd soon be back at the pub, the theatre, church, concerts, sports, the gym, school, college, restaurants and art galleries or going on holiday. How wrong we were!

So, our sadly diminished society continues. Sometimes I reflect that even a skilled writer, such as Margaret Atwood would have difficulty inventing such a dystopian society as that in which we seem to live now, with all its fears, rules and restrictions. But of course there are grounds for hope, we now have vaccines that work, medical treatment of Covid-19 patients has improved and there have been astonishing acts of kindness and generosity from so many people.

But saddest of all has been the death count both from the virus and other conditions that may have been sidelined by the pandemic. Many of us have lost loved ones, family, friends, neighbours and to make matters worse we have not been able to be with them at the end and that grieving families are having to make decisions about the funeral...ones they never imagined they'd need to make...like who can be invited to the permitted small scaled down gathering to bid someone farewell. Of course we have found some ways round this, like using video, streaming or simply gathering outside the church or crematorium as a mark of respect or love. But it's not the same.

So we can use this time to bring our pain, anger and hopes for the future to God who cares deeply about his suffering people. Why not use this prayer which has been specially written for today? Not only today, but in the future too.

<i>God of love,</i>	<i>As we</i>
<i>think about all that has changed this year,</i>	<i>help us to trust that</i>
<i>you are always with us.</i>	<i>As we remember those who</i>
<i>have died,</i>	<i>help us to trust that they are at peace</i>
<i>with you.</i>	<i>As we reach out to others with kindness and</i>
<i>care,</i>	<i>may hope shine out in every heart and home.</i>
<i>Amen</i>	

This comes with my own prayers for you and all those for whom you mourn, and in the hopes of a future resurrection.

May God bless you and all for whom you pray

Alice