

Changing world, changing Church



“Things won’t be the same afterwards.”

“We will have to get used to a new normal.”

With those, and many similar expressions, we all realise that COVID-19 has changed everything. One statistic that struck me just yesterday (I write on the last day of April) was that more Americans have died so far of this dreadful disease than in the two decades of the Vietnam War. By the time you read this, that figure will be much higher. Similarly, we are seeing far too many people taken from us, not least in care homes. And we know that, whatever relaxation is applied to the lockdown, severe restrictions must remain for some time to come. Things won’t get back to pre-COVID “normal” for the foreseeable future.

That applies to the Church as much as to the world. During these strange last few weeks, we have had to learn to do things differently. Many of our clergy have been wonderfully creative in enabling worshippers to carry on with corporate worship in different ways. Many have been particularly good in enabling the ‘poorest’ (those without computers, smartphones or internet) to access worship. Well done to them. We just don’t know how long this will last – when we can get back to anything like the old “normal” in our church buildings.

I hope – and I have some evidence for this – that this situation is forcing important questions to be asked (and even answered). What is essential for corporate worship? How can we ‘do church’ in our homes? How can we be the Church without the building? How can we best support the ‘poorest’ or the ‘weakest’ among us? It would be good if those questions lead to permanent changes, as well as temporary ones.

That final question, about the ‘poorest’ and the ‘weakest’, relates very much to the world, as well as the Church. The financial cost of this coronavirus will be immense. We should be campaigning, and doing all we can, to ensure that the burden falls heaviest on those most able to afford it. That is the Christian way.

With best wishes



+Donald
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