

## **BISHOP'S BULLETIN No 18**

### **To the Licensed Clergy of Peterborough Diocese**

**6 July 2020**



Dear friends

#### **Unlocked?**

It was always going to be difficult. Not so much the near-impossible balancing act between public safety and social living, between health and the economy, between saving lives and saving livelihoods. That is politics: a noble calling for those we elect; but one where it is impossible to get things right all the time, and where difficult choices, impossible balancing acts, affect people's lives in many ways.

It wasn't so much the politics which was always going to be difficult, it was the people. Some found the discipline of lockdown relatively easy, others found it appalling. Some can emerge calmly and "sensibly", while others are terrified to return to society, and yet others are breaking out with wild abandon. People (we) are the real problem.

I'm not criticising them (us). I'm just observing the fact that, just as many of us have been scarred physically by the illness; and many scarred emotionally by the loss of loved ones; many more are showing, and many, many more will show, signs of psychological damage. Mental health provision has been inadequate for years, but in the coming months and years we will see that very starkly and acutely.

As clergy and churches, we will have the great challenge of helping and supporting our people, many of them quite badly damaged by the experience of living through lockdown. Some of us as clergy will need to attend to ourselves first, and to seek help for ourselves: I have put various helpful links in these bulletins in recent weeks, and, within the diocese, support will always be available to those who ask. My Chaplain, Canon Tim Alban Jones, is a good first person to try. Email him [here](#).

But all of us as clergy will need to look to our people: we will need the skills to know who is coping and who isn't, we will need the wisdom to know how to offer help, or point to where help can be found. We will need to be, more than ever, agents of healing. Over the next few weeks, we as a diocese will be putting in place some new ways of supporting our clergy in the challenges of leading our people back out into a very different post-lockdown (but not, alas, post-covid) world. Watch this space!

## **Bell Ringing**

I have had a number of requests about the return of bell ringing in our churches. This is now possible, at least in some towers, and as you would expect, with some conditions. If you have bells you should look at the guidance from the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers, which you can find [here](#). If you can get bells ringing again, your ringers, and some at least of your parishioners, will be very happy people – and the message will go out that the church is alive.

## **YouTube Channel**

Many of us have had to learn a few new IT skills over recent months. I have been video-recording at least two talks each week: a midweek meditation on a Psalm, and a Sunday sermon, as well as one-off talks as requested, and a series of five talks and two sermons for our ordination candidates. Quite a few people are kind enough to tell me that they have found them helpful.

Recordings of all my talks since lockdown can be found, with a bit of searching, in various places on our diocesan website, but now my PA Joanne Gibson has very helpfully put them all in one place, in a dedicated YouTube channel. You can subscribe to that (free) to catch first sight of newly-released material, or to look up older talks. YouTube channels, like Zoom meetings, have incomprehensible addresses. You can find mine with a simple [click](#).

(You can request my sermon for next Sunday, or up to a few weeks ahead, by [emailing Joanne](#). I will continue offering sermons online through the summer.)

## **Holy Land Pilgrimage**

April next year seems a long time ahead, and who knows what will have changed by then? I hope that our Diocesan Holy Land Pilgrimage will be going ahead. These pilgrimages open people's eyes to the places of the Bible and the ministry of Jesus, as well as to the realities of Israel and Palestine today. Almost everyone who goes is deeply moved, and many are transformed by the experience. Lightline Pilgrimages, our tour operators, are making a good coronavirus offer: you can cancel a booking up to 31 December this year for any reason, and receive an immediate full refund of your deposit and any other payments. Numbers are limited, so securing a place by booking now is a good idea. Do have a look, and commend this to any parishioners who might be interested. Full details and online booking are [here](#).

With love in Christ

+ Donald