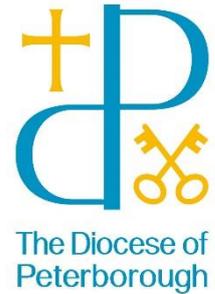


BISHOP'S BULLETIN No 36

To the Licensed Clergy of Peterborough Diocese

24 January 2021



Dear friends

It seems likely that we will still be under significant restrictions for months to come, with a second Easter and very possibly Pentecost celebrated largely online. But we won't "lose" Easter any more than we "lost" Christmas. God became incarnate for all eternity. Jesus Christ rose from the dead for all eternity. Those truths remain.

Vaccinations

I have been asked whether clergy will be prioritised for the vaccine. This is a tricky area, with opposing views strongly held. There are two sorts of prioritisation: getting onto the immediate list, and being put at the top of the remainder list when all the age and illness-based groups have been vaccinated. A strong case has been made to government that clergy be vaccinated now, but there is nothing further to report at present. Some vaccination centres may have been making their own exceptions, but this is being discouraged in favour of national consistency.

My own view, for what it is worth, is that the government's official line on this is exactly right: prioritise according to the danger of serious illness or death, with the only additional group being the healthcare and social care workers who are face to face with the sick: we cannot afford to lose those people, or to have them self-isolating. All others: teachers, shop staff, clergy, etc, should wait their normal turn.

Bishop's Charity

I nominate a charity each year to receive any donations or gifts I receive, and confirmation collections (traditionally at the bishop's disposal). Since 2018 my charity has been the Leprosy Mission, but for this year (and I expect next year) I have chosen **Embrace the Middle East**. You can find details on the flier which appears at the end of this bulletin. Once we get back to doing confirmations, certainly not before the summer, that will be sent to parishes and schools in advance, so they can include it in the order of service.

With love in Christ

+ Donald

Bishop's Charity 2021



I am designating **Embrace the Middle East** as my Bishop's Charity for this year. Confirmation collections, and any donations I receive during the year, will go to this very good cause.

Many of you will have known this Christian Charity by its former name of Bible Lands Society: there are still many Bethlehem Carol Sheets bearing that name in churches up and down the Diocese! It became 'Embrace the Middle East' (or simply 'Embrace') in 2012.

Currently supporting projects in Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq and Syria, Embrace helps people of all faiths and none to free themselves from a life of poverty and injustice.

They work with some remarkable local Christian communities, bringing healing, hope and lasting change through healthcare, education and community development projects.

The Middle East is an extraordinary centre-point of the major world faiths. Without political, social, and educational justice there, we will not see stability in the wider world. Our colleagues at the Cathedral are also supporting Embrace this year with a particular focus on Lebanon. I have seen the severe poverty and the statelessness of many in the region, in contrast to the relative wealth and comfort of others, which it would be good to see for all. It is good that we can work on this together.

These are the countries of our spiritual heritage. The people we read about and honour in our scriptures are the forebears of the populations so in need today. I'm delighted to do whatever we can to help this excellent charity.

+ Donald