

RECTOR'S PINT

It is nearly a year since we entered the first Lockdown. Since then, we have seen so much pain and hardship. Lives have been lost; many have struggled with ongoing debilitating illness. None of us could have failed to be moved by the heart-breaking stories of people being unable to say the sort of goodbyes they would want to loved ones. Businesses have taken a huge hit with so many people suffering as a consequence. I think we should particularly spare a thought for our local pubs, restaurants and hotels and the livelihoods that have been affected because of their limited trading.

There have been extraordinary stories of hope as well, the ways our schools have kept on providing education and how our villages have responded with people looking out for each other, that has been truly inspiring. I suspect though that as the spring starts to move forward, we will be rather less enthusiastic than last year when many people commented that it was as if nature itself was taking a deep breath. We are all tired now, we just want this to stop.

I am of course not qualified to speculate on the origins of all of this and I suspect there is much more to come before any clear picture emerges, will it ever fully emerge? Closer to home though, I hope that this has taught us not to take things for granted. I miss the freedom to spend time with family and friends, a pint or two at a pub, and wandering around without any sort of sinister looking covering over my face, I am a man of simple tastes! I have been hugely grateful for the technology that has allowed us to meet virtually, but that of course is no substitute for the real thing. However, online meetings have largely proved to be significantly shorter, a good thing!

We are now in Lent, a season that is a time for reflection, perhaps of sorrow and sadness. We look forward to Easter, following the success of Harvest and Christmas I very much hope that on Easter morning we will be able to host another outdoor service, this time at 10.00am in the Churchyard in Great Haseley, please watch out for confirmation of this. Before Easter comes Good Friday of course. At Christmas we celebrated Emmanuel, God with us. Good Friday is all about God being with us as well, in the wreckage, muddle, pain, death and sin of our existence, God in Jesus Christ, entering into the deepest and darkest of human experiences. None of us can say exactly how this is going to play out, at the moment and for the time being we remain in our Lenten reflection. I believe that God is to be seen in the Good Friday experiences of loss, but also that we look forward in hope, Easter and life will come - That though is for the next 'Rector's Pint'.

Simon