

14<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Dear friends, it was good to celebrate Easter with you this year, albeit in a new and rather challenging way. The fact is, however, that Easter still happened and even though we were unable to celebrate it together in our customary manner, it was still a reality. That's because Easter is always a reality, an eternal reality. When Jesus rose from the tomb nobody else was there, when the disciples came the tomb was already empty, Jesus had already risen, it happened without witnesses. The great act of God's love needs no external presence to validate it. It has always been that way and always will be.

It seems to me that our role is simply to be open to receiving God's love and then sharing it. This is one of the great strengths of the church, that it does not rely on its buildings, as lovely as they may be and as important as they may be to us, in terms of the memories they hold and as centres of gathering for Christians. No, wherever a Christian is, there is the church.

The last thing Jesus said to his disciples before the Ascension was "Go and make disciples of all nations" not, "huddle together for protection and stay where you are." We are meant to be out in the world, it's the proper place for Christians. Yes, we want to spend time together in worship and growing in the faith but only so that we are strengthened and emboldened to take the gospel into the world.

The current lockdown may make it difficult for us to practice our worship as we might normally do but it cannot stop us from being Christians, those who love and worship God and His Son, Jesus Christ and who have been gifted the Holy Spirit to enable us to be His presence in the world.

And finally... two more from my anonymous friend.

Why are colds bad criminals? Because they're easy to catch.

How does a penguin build its house? Igloos it together.

I know.

Sent by Canon Tom Page

Vicar: Ascension with All Saints

Chelmsford

(AwAS)