

2<sup>nd</sup> April 2020

Hello friends, I had a good day yesterday, I actually got to go out further than when Dave takes me for a walk. I collected and delivered some prescriptions and also some food and clothing for the homeless. It was good to be doing something positive and to get out of the house. I'm sure Janette enjoyed it too!

Whilst out I fell into conversation with someone (at a safe distance) and as we went our separate ways he said, "keep in touch." It's quite a common thing to say and a way of indicating that we value the relationship we have. But 'Keeping in touch' isn't so easy now, in fact, actual touching is to be avoided where possible. No handshakes or even elbow bumps for the time being.

Of course, I've always been aware that physical contact is important, a handshake a hug, a peck on the cheek, simple ways of expressing a friendship or deeper relationship that is important to us. I have to admit that I'm an enthusiastic hugger! For me it indicates a sense of openness even vulnerability, letting someone get that close to us, it's a sign of trust.

And yet, touching can be something we take for granted, that casual pat on the back or hand on the shoulder as a sign of encouragement, a gentle arm around the shoulder when someone is feeling a bit low. Naturally we need to be careful how we employ the gift of touch, some people are not 'touchy-feely' and we have to respect that. Sometimes physical contact may be inappropriate and we have to be aware of the safety and security of others. But where it is accepted and welcome the gift of touch can be a wonderful thing.

Jesus often touches the 'untouchable' as a sign of healing or acceptance and he allows himself to be touched when others come to him. He washes feet and has his own feet anointed with precious perfume. But as we shall see in Holy Week, not every experience of touch is positive. Jesus is beaten and spat upon, manhandled as he carries his cross through the streets of Jerusalem, held down as the soldiers nail him to the cross.

I suppose what I'm getting at here is, when we are allowed that gift of social contact once more, what will we do with it? Will it be generous and loving or will it be hurtful? Only you can decide for yourself how you will deploy this gift of God in future, it's something to think about.

Attached today the Diocesan Cycle of Prayer, Palm Sunday Service book, Palm Sunday Readings and Psalm sheet, and the Hymns for Palm Sunday and Holy Week Hymns so that you can join in

with as much as possible. I hope you'll find these useful.

And today's little laugh... At a confirmation class the candidates were asked to name one of the

Ten Commandments. A young man piped up "Do not admit adultery" !

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