

13<sup>th</sup> June 2020

In the first few weeks of lockdown I was greatly encouraged to see stories emerging of how the earth was recovering from the pollution that has blighted its beauty. Then, a slight easing of the rules, various food outlets open and suddenly there's rubbish all over the place. I despair.

There was much talk of a 'New Normal', a better way of living, a more environmentally caring way of life after lockdown but it hasn't taken long for that beautiful idea to bite the dust. What are we like? Why does it come so easy to the human race to make a mess of the world we live in and indeed depend on for life? Could we not look to our more creative nature than the destructive and make something positive out of this time of change?

As you may be able to tell, I'm not having a good day today, having just seen a discarded TV set dumped in the alley next to the Church, I'm feeling a bit frustrated that, for some, it's just 'carry on as usual'. The idea that someone else will clean up after us just won't do, we have to educate people to take responsibility for the way they behave and the things they do.

I think that, in some way, this ties in with what I'm seeing around the 'Black Lives Matter' issue. Yes there's an acknowledgement that there has been a profound and prolonged mistreatment of people across the world because of their colour or ethnicity but many people want someone else to clear it up for them, it's too messy and hard to deal with. As Christians, however, we have a duty to minister healing in our community, our nation and our world. Of course it's painful to face up to what has happened in the past but if we don't then the pain just continues, we don't leave it long before we seek to deal with a toothache and this is so much worse.

So now is a time for courage, to stand up and be counted as those who are prepared to engage with the issues and not put off what should have happened long ago. There will be some who try to hi-jack the movement for their own purposes, but we must not let that happen. An opportunity to clean up our world has presented itself and we should grasp it.

Tom.

And finally... Jesus, sitting on a park bench, turns to the young man next to him and says "When I asked you to follow me I didn't mean on Twitter."

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