



8th April 2020

From the Archbishop of York and the Bishops of the Diocese of York

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

We are walking together into this holy time through Maundy Thursday to Easter Day. Thank you for our companionship together. We are very aware of all you are giving, enduring and discovering. None of us have trodden this ground before so we each have to come to terms with the impact of that on us personally and in the way we care for those committed to us.

Between us we will go through a whole range of reactions and will probably be finding out new things about ourselves. Of course there is no 'right' response, and each day may find us in a different place in ourselves. All of us need to keep the roots nourished as best we can, in friendship, beauty, prayer, gentleness, rest and refreshment. We urge you to take good breaks, keep a rhythm of days off and holiday in these strange circumstances.

There is clearly a great deal of entrepreneurship going on! People are finding ways to be in touch and support folk, watching out for those who might be overlooked. We give thanks for the benefit of technology and all that opens for us. We also recognise that for some it is inaccessible or just a burden. The key thing, surely, is connecting with one another in whatever way we can. We are asked to keep a physical distance but we are called to extend and deepen relationships.

Abraham and Sarah were called to set out without knowing where they were going and it does feel like that at present. In the next days we are on the Way of the Cross, keeping company with Jesus, who in turn will walk with us until we recognise him on the Way.

The Lord be with you.

+Sentamu Ebor:

+Glyn Beverley

+Alison Hullen

+John Selby

+Paul Whitby

Archbishop John Sentamu; Bishop Glyn Webster; Bishop Alison White;
Bishop John Thompson; and Bishop Paul Ferguson

The following Easter message was shared by Carolyn Edwards, the Diocesan Children and Youth Adviser.

When I was six or seven for Easter my parents bought me a set of Lindt chocolate bunnies. I was delighted with the six little chocolate shapes neatly presented in a small box with delicate decoration in pale blues and yellows. Until, I went up the road to my friend's house where she had hundreds (maybe a small exaggeration) of enormous Easter eggs in great big boxes, with foil wrapping and the promise of delight! The reality was that, pound for pound, I probably had more and nicer chocolate, but I can still remember the disappointment and the campaign that my brother and I started that we had 'proper' Easter Eggs like everyone else!

This year as we celebrate Holy Week in isolation, there will be very little packaging or promise of delight. Many of us are concerned about loved ones, some of us might even be mourning. There will not be the large feasts with family and friends, or trumpets as part of the final hymn on Easter Sunday! But pound for pound I hope that our Easter experience is more Lindt. That without the packaging we can look more closely at the story, dwell longer with the feelings, and be more conscious of the hope of new life and resurrection in times fear and anger. It has been lovely to hear how many of you are embracing new technologies to engage with children, young people and their families. We now have guidelines for working online with children on our webpages, but please make sure you always adhere to your safeguarding policies, whatever method of communication you are using.

As the desperate Mum of allergy sufferers who couldn't eat chocolate, one year I tried to make what they could have seem more exciting by creating a treasure hunt around the house. Each child was given an age appropriate clue to a location where their next clue was, until after mad dashes round the house, the last clue instructed them to tell me the Easter story in exchange for their gift. This became a family tradition that they insisted on maintaining right up until late teenagehood. If I am honest, there were quite a few Easter Saturday nights, where I was wandering round the house with coloured slips of paper thinking 'whose stupid idea was this?' but the joy it brought on Easter morning was worth the pain. It doesn't have to be complicated - I am pretty sure that every year had the clue 'the thing we wash our clothes in', but I do hope that you are able to find some way of connecting with each other and with the living God whose first words when he saw his friends again was 'Do not be afraid'.

Carolyn Edwards