

10@10: A Lent Prayer Project

Dear Church Friends,

It does not seem a year since I sent out Palm Crosses at the start of the first lockdown .. but once again we find ourselves in a national lockdown. It is not certain as to when and how we might open our churches for services again at the moment but I am hopeful the situation will be clearer by Easter. Watch this space as they say!

If you have had access to electronic communication you will already know I have been thinking about what activities our churches might be able to engage in together this Lent. The season starts on Ash Wednesday which falls on **Feb 17th this year and will last for 40 days**. The great Lenten themes of self-examination, reflection and solitude are built around Jesus' 40 day sojourn in the wilderness. In some ways it might feel we have been in a time of solitude and reflection for a while .. but I wonder whether our minds have stopped with our bodies during these lockdowns? For many of us our minds have continued their work apace. So I want to invite you this Lent to make time to silence our minds in the chaos of this bewildering time so that we can meet God (Psalm 46v 10).

This is an ancient task, as old as the hills in which Jesus wandered 2000 years ago. To enter the silent land of a quiet mind is a learned activity. *I would highly recommend a little book called 'Into the Silent Land' by Martin Laird if anyone is seriously interested in the practice of silence this Lent! It is available through most book stores online and on the high street.*

So this year I am inviting you to be part of the **10@10 Prayer Project**. It is an invitation to join together in learning about Silent Prayers by stopping for 10 minutes, wherever you are and whatever you are doing, at 10am on each of the days of Lent. Making this a **Project** is my attempt to draw us together whilst still in lockdown to find the still point at the centre of all life .. for it is here God is found.

The project starts on Ash Wednesday at 10am when I invite everyone to find a space to (safely) burn their Palm Crosses from 2020 and to embrace all the symbolism which that offers. I will be burning my cross in church and live streaming this on facebook for anyone who would like to be part of that. In this act we are burning away the year that has been. Seeing in the ashes a new symbol of resurrection from the ashes. The invitation is then to sit in silence for 10 minutes seeking to quiet our mind and soul before God.

Then from Ash Wednesday to Palm Sunday we will all try to fall silent at 10am for 10 minutes each in our own homes or workplaces. **The silence will also be observed each day in one of our churches in the Benefice.** Each day at 10am I will light the Paschal Candle from last Easter and watch it's light wane in silence knowing we will light a new Paschal Candle on Easter Day .. when our new light and new hope dawns.

As part of thisProject **I would like to invite every individual (or couple) to choose a time to come and sit with me on one of the days when I offer silence in a church.** To do this you can sign up via the link on our website which allows you to choose the intended day that you wish to join me(include which church you would like to sit in. The link is on the News & Events Page of the website www.our-benefice.com) . Feel free to send me an email or give me a call to ask me to sign you up if this is easier. I look forward to making the Lenten journey together as we fall silent for 10@10 this year.

May the Peace of God be with you in the silence we find this Lent ..x

Doug

Rev Doug Heming