

Mawrth/March 2020

“Y blawd yn y celwrn ni threulir, a’r olew yn y sten ni dderfydd...” (I Bren.17.14)
“The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar run dry...” (I Kings 17.14)

The first thing we have to remember at all times, and particularly at this time of world and national crisis regarding the spread of coronavirus, is that God is in charge. Let’s not forget the basics. He is the Creator of all things, visible and invisible. He is Almighty. Nothing happens in this world unless God either wills it or allows it. That, of course, leaves many questions to be asked and answered. We can ask the questions but we may not get the answers – at least not yet. Sometimes things happen in this world as a result of man’s greed, carelessness or because of his inhumanity to his fellow man. The Lord put man in charge of what He had created (Genesis 1.26). We now know that mankind has not made a very good job of stewarding, of taking care of God’s world. We also know that from the sin of Adam, we live in a fallen world, where man does not naturally gravitate to his Maker and to do His will. As a result of sin and its knock-on effect, we all suffer. Often, innocent people suffer as a result of someone else’s sin.

We don’t really know all the ins-and-outs of the coronavirus. What we do know is that it has had a devastating effect on the whole of humanity, within weeks. It does teach us one important lesson, if nothing else: we are not in charge of our own destiny. One minute mankind is rejoicing in his own greatness: he can do everything, go everywhere. Nothing is beyond his bounds and his greatness. In December, Boris Johnson won a landslide victory after the general election and the new government could do anything. Then, before things got under way, the floods came, sweeping across the country, ruining homes, businesses and livelihoods. Before the earth had time to dry out, coronavirus arrived, again sweeping across the world destroying people’s lives, livelihoods and security. This is all a poignant reminder that we are very feeble and impotent creatures when things go wrong. They are beyond our control. It is time to turn to God. Many have never turned from Him, but many have forgotten that He’s in charge. Many have never believed or acknowledged Him at all. Now, where do we turn in our hopelessness. Yes, God is suddenly there to be blamed. It’s His fault. If he’s a loving, caring and almighty God, why does He let all this happen? We’ve heard it all before haven’t we?

In I Kings 17, Elijah the Tishbite...said to Ahab, “As the Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word.” Yes, God brings about drought here. Sometimes things happen because God has a very good reason for causing them to happen, but, we must come back to Him. How many things did God do to punish the nation of Israel for its wickedness and its idolatry, and yet it did not repent? In this account in I Kings 17, Elijah was sent to a widow in Sarephta. When he arrived there she was gathering sticks to make one last meal for herself and her son before dying. Elijah told her to make a little cake for him before she made anything for herself and her son. He expressly told her that the bin of flour would not be used up, nor the jar of oil run dry, until the day the Lord would send rain upon the earth. That is the message for us today. In all the panic-buying going on at the moment, God tells us to ‘be still and know that He is God’ (Psalm 46.10). Supplies will not run out. There will be enough food for everyone if we are not selfish and greedy. One of the greatest titles for God in the Bible is “Jehovah Jireh” (The Lord Provides) (Genesis 22.14) when He provided a sacrifice for Abraham, instead of his son, Isaac, on Mount Moriah. I remind myself of this title every day, in particular when I am tempted to start worrying about money and material things – or in fact anything. God has promised to provide us with all our *needs*, not all our wants. God will be working out His purposes through and beyond coronavirus. He wants us to trust Him, not the things of this world. “Do not put your trust in princes, nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help.”

In the New Testament, Jesus, the Incarnate Son of God, teaches us the same thing about God's provision, and not to be anxious about tomorrow. We really need to heed these words of life as we look ahead to tomorrow, next week and the weeks and months ahead. God alone heals. Yes, He uses doctors and nurses and medication to help us, but above all, He is the giver of all good gifts. He alone is the one who brings us Salvation. In English, the word 'salvation' has moved away from its origin in the word 'health'. In Welsh, the word 'Iachawdwriaeth' has the word 'iach' in it, which means that if we as the human race are to be really 'healthy', then we are to become 'healthy' in God, that is, 'saved'.

Lent is about perseverance, and uniting ourselves as Christians with the fasting and spiritual battle of Jesus in the wilderness, and as the season progresses, with His passion and agony on the Cross, in spilling His redemptive Blood over us all. It is only through uniting ourselves to His Passion that we may pass through the bitterness of suffering and death and be united with Him in His glorious Resurrection.

Byddwch lawen. Cadwch y Ffydd. Be joyful. Keep the Faith.

Fr. Gareth

In our Mission, we carry on with 'the daily round and common task' in saying the Daily Office (Morning and Evening Prayer or Mattins and Evensong). Reading and meditating on God's Word daily, and reading it out aloud, proclaims God's Victory over all that is evil and destructive, and over Satan himself.

At this particular time it is very fitting to pray the Litany regularly, in which we have the bidding, "From lightning and tempest; from plague, pestilence and famine; from battle, violence and murder, and from sudden death" to which we respond, "**Good Lord, deliver us.**"

"Oddi wrth fellt a thymestl; oddi wrth bla, haint a newyn; oddi wrth drais, rhyfel a llofruddiaeth, ac oddi wrth farwolaeth sydyn" ac atebwn ninnau, "**Gwarded ni, Arglwydd Daionus.**"