

PRAYERS FOR THE WEEK, by Liz Holder

Monday 25 May 2020

From Christian Aid:

A prayer for times of isolation

'For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come... will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.' (Romans 8:38-39)

God of heaven and earth,
in these times of isolation,
apart from loved ones
distant from friends
away from neighbours
thank you that there is nothing
in all of creation,
not even coronavirus,
that is able to separate us from your love.

And may your love that never fails
continue to be shared
through the kindness of strangers
looking out for each other,
for neighbours near and far
all recognising our shared vulnerability,
each of us grateful for every breath,
and willing everyone to know the gift
of a full and healthy life.
Keep us all in your care.

Amen

The current need for self-isolation and social distancing as exceptional measures speaks to the greater need we have as humans to be in community. The world needs community like never before.

In that spirit, the Corrymeela Community in Northern Ireland offers this prayer:

God of the heavens above, God of the earth below: a killer whale stopped traffic when its dorsal fin was spotted cutting through the startled waves of our strong and stranger fjord. It pointed to the realms that we humans float between: the anxious world we occupy, and the murkier depths of meaning that we navigate with you. As it gulps air then dives below, reappearing to surprise, may we learn to emerge, as well, as those who join our deepest faith with the matters of this earth.

Amen

*With reference to the sighting of orcas in Strangford Lough, 15 May 2020;
additional inspiration from a sermon by Harry Emerson Fosdick*

Some New Beatitudes:

Blessed are those with Covid-19, for they are the focus of all our prayers.
Blessed are their families, for they carry a heavy burden.
Blessed are the doctors who treat them, for they are making critical decisions.
Blessed are the nurses, for they have enormous courage.
Blessed are the hospital staff, for they work around the clock.
Blessed are the medical researchers, for they shall find a vaccine.
Blessed are the delivery drivers, for they are heroes of this struggle.
Blessed are the supply chain workers, for they keep our nation alive.
Blessed are those who have lost their jobs, for they are paying a terrible price.
Blessed are people from the Asian community, for they face persecution.

Written by Bishop Steven Charleston, a Native American who is a retired Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Alaska