

## New Hope

For many people, Spring marks the beginning of a new season often associated with new life or a new start. It was often regarded as the start of a new year, a new beginning. The winter is a fallow time when things appear to stand still and not change. With the return of the light and the warmth, things come back to life or are born. For many people, the third national lockdown has been a fallow time, waiting to be released back into life. I guess many people have seen on TV the cattle being released from the winter cow sheds to new spring grass. There is a sense of urgency and excitement about new freedom and fresh food! Sadly, despite the excellent work of people during the lockdown, there is still great uncertainty about the way forward. There is real caution to ensure the gains in the fight against Covid-19 are not lost. We may be able to see some first steps, but although the direction of the path to recovery is clearer, there is still a long way to be travelled.

If we are honest, for most of our lives we only see a few first steps and have no real idea of the exact direction of travel. The mistake is always to wait for more clarity and miss the chance to take that first step. We are all very good at hindsight and making helpful suggestions. What we need to improve is our foresight which is much less precise and clear. As we look towards Easter at the beginning of April, we are reminded that Jesus had excellent foresight and told his disciples what was going to happen to him; he would die and be resurrected on the third day. His disciples were unable to comprehend what Jesus was saying, or else they thought they knew what was really going to happen. All they achieved was to become lost and confused. Jesus has to rescue them on Easter Sunday and turn them back in the right direction.

We are given some insight into God's working, which is very rarely clear and obvious. Instead, we are encouraged to take small steps forward and trust that we will be guided to the right path. We see Jesus concerned with lost and vulnerable people. As we emerge from this crisis there will be many people who are lost and afraid. We need to take time to help and encourage others, instead of the way of the world which is to help ourselves and make sure we are alright. The pandemic reminds us that we are accountable to each other and we should offer support and encouragement to those around us. This is about a community working together rather than a few doing well while others struggle around them. The real hope is that as we have drawn together in the difficult times, we continue to do so in this new beginning.

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