

PAST PUT BEHIND US, FOR THE FUTURE TAKE US ...

ACTS 19 verses 1-20

We are living through quite a unique moment in history. We are truly living in a global world. We are part of the global community. The corona virus knows no boundary, it is an ever-present risk to all people regardless of colour, race, occupation, wealth, status, faith, nationality, age, gender.... In this sense it is a true leveller. We are not the masters of the universe that we thought we were and that has brought about a new humility.

For some this period in history has caused them, day in day out, to draw on the deepest resources within themselves to fight for lives afflicted by the virus. Some of these people have seen themselves held in higher esteem than they ever thought possible through doing the messy jobs, the meticulous jobs, the caring jobs. Why is this so? It is because we are living through a time where what is valued in the world is being turned upside down. We are getting a glimpse of Kingdom values.

Most of us, who don't fall into that category of workers, have found ourselves reassessing what matters most in life. We are discovering that we value things that are of universal and lasting worth — friends, family, food, engagement with the natural world, beauty, compassion, appreciation and to some extent 'Being' rather than 'Doing.'

Strange, untimely and concerning as it may feel perhaps the widespread cry that 'Black Lives Matter' has actually arisen at precisely the right time, its God given time. A time when many people have space to listen and reflect and to interpret. A time when we can all identify with vulnerability. A time when we can look racism in the eye and name it for what it is. A time when we need to ask ourselves, whether either by our action or inaction, we are complicit in this. And to ask whether we speaking out when we should?

Our encounters with God may not be as dramatic as those described in today's reading from Acts but our response can be the same. The Spirit showed, in their true light, the practices and deceit of the exorcists. It was then, when the light of God was shining on them, that many resolved to put past practices behind them and to follow The Way — the way of Christ. To turn their lives around.

Words from two hymns come to mind and I invite you to read the first and prayerfully reflect on it and then do the same with the second.

Lord, I come to your awesome presence,  
From the shadows into your radiance;  
By your blood I may enter your brightness;  
Search me, try me, consume all my darkness-  
Shine on me, shine on me.

*(Shine, Jesus, Shine v.3)*

#### PRAYERFUL REFLECTION

Lord for ourselves; in living power remake us,  
self on the cross and Christ upon the throne;  
past put behind us, for the future take us,  
Lord of our lives, to live for Christ alone.

*(Lord, for the Years v.5)*

#### PRAYERFUL REFLECTION

I pray that God may guide us as we potentially step out into a new world order.

SHALOM