

Pastoral Letter – East Anglia District

Chair of the District - Revd. Julian M. Pursehouse

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Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Over the last week or so it feels as though the world has been waking up again particularly as some of the restrictions around *lockdown* are eased and we return to some of the things that we associate with *normal* life. This last week I've visited a garden centre and bought plants for the garden, I took a trip to Thetford Forest for off-road cycling, walked around a country park and enjoyed afternoon tea socially-distanced with a good friend. At the beginning of June some children are returning to school and some adventurous adults are making their way to car showrooms! All of this indicates a nation that is cautiously finding its way out of the restrictions that were imposed towards the end of March.

However, we all know that this is accompanied by risk; no one quite knows what the implications of this increased social contact will be for transmission rates, hospital admissions and potentially increased mortality rates. There remains a deep level of anxiety for those who are elderly, vulnerable and those at risk from underlying health issues. It is abundantly clear that finding our collective way out of lockdown is going to be infinitely more complex than when we entered this phase. Every one of us is going to have to exercise *wisdom* and *discernment* in order to calculate risk at the same time as resuming many patterns of our everyday lives. In recent weeks we have been reminded in a high profile media story that we are not simply *individuals* – we belong together and our actions and choices have ramifications for those around us! Where will we find the wisdom for living?

In the biblical tradition 'wisdom' is a highly prized virtue but one that is often elusive. It is not exactly human intelligence or knowledge but more the authenticity and truthful sense that flows from a right relationship with the living God. The writer of Proverbs suggests that the beginning of wisdom is the 'fear of the Lord' – less trepidation and more the desire to give God proper place at the very heart of our being. It is the authentic humility of those made in the image of God who seek to reflect the goodness of the Creator through the lives that are lived in the world. In chapter three of the book of Proverbs the writer says;

***'Happy are those who find wisdom,
And those who get understanding,
For her income is better than silver,
And her revenue better than gold.
She is more precious than jewels,
And nothing you desire can compare with her.'* (Proverbs 3:13-20)**

I do hope and pray that as you emerge from the restrictions of lockdown that you will find the wisdom to make the right choices, the grace to ever keep in mind the well-being of your neighbour and the joy of reconnecting with the people you love. May God bless you and enable you to tread carefully.....

Peace and Blessings,

Julian