**WWJD?**

*WWJD? – ‘What Would Jesus Do?’ - was quite a popular slogan a few years ago. Alan Kent, Associate Priest in Bro Teifi LMA, has been wondering what Jesus would do about Covid-19, and how it is affecting our world*

I was born asthmatic, and have lived, and coped, with it all of my life, even joining the RAF, where, amongst other things and duties, I regularly played rugby and did everything that was required of me, mucking in just the same as everyone else. I never let being asthmatic stop me from doing anything, I was determined that it would never get the better of me, and it rarely did.

Then, along came the coronavirus, and things changed. Being asthmatic I was told to stay indoors and self-isolate. This meant that I could still go out for walks as exercise, which is something I do most days of the week, if only to get away from the telephone and PC. Walking and getting fresh air is nearly compulsory for me as it helps my general health and wellbeing.

I assumed it also meant that I could still go and visit my parishioners, but it was not to be, we had to stay away from everybody else, which really made me search deep within myself. I have always seen myself as a pastor; visiting is a huge part of that, especially when there are elderly people involved. Despite any personal danger to themselves, other workers would still be able to go and work and help others, but not clergy. Of course I could telephone them or use other electronic means. However, apart from the fact that some of my parishioners do not have, or are unable to use, such things, this method feels a little cold and distant.

I often tell people that part of a priest’s job is to be a spiritual doctor, helping others where and when needed, whatever the cost. When I think of the missionaries and evangelists who went overseas, sometimes to places of great danger, it reminds me of where a pastor should be; danger never stopped them going and serving wherever they were called.

To be honest, I found all this very hard. Being a priest I had always taken my pastoral duties very seriously. We were now told to minister from afar - this left me feeling a little guilty and inadequate but I have since come to realise that I was just being selfish, and only thinking about myself.

Three weeks into my self-isolation, I received ‘the letter’ from the local health board informing me that as I have asthma, I now come into the at-risk category. Now it was getting personal and serious, now I knew I had to stay indoors, isolated for at least 12 weeks. I knew God was busy at this time but I also knew he still had time for me.

During a prayer time I was reminded of the verse God gave me years ago, one that I have also used to encourage others, Philippians 4:13 (NRSV) “I can do all things through him who strengthens me.” I have sought the comfort of that verse numerous times over the years, sometimes I needed help to stand up and preach, sometimes to help the grieving, sometimes to help others in a difficult relationship.

Now, on this occasion, it was different; now this verse gave me comfort in my isolation, it means that I can isolate, not feel guilty or inadequate, with His help I can also help others staying exactly where I am, keeping them safe as well as myself.

Subsequently the answer to the question at the start seems easy now; Jesus would do exactly what he did do! He would give of himself, he would accept any pain or abuse, even isolation, and he would certainly be putting the cares and interests of others before his own safety. He might not take my fears, anxieties, worries, isolation and guilt away, but he would be with me in them, he knows how that feels, and I know he feels for me.

If you really want to see what Jesus is doing today look at the faces of the doctors, nurses, everybody in the NHS, the care sector, look at the food shop staff and their delivery drivers. Look at the volunteers around the country who are helping out, some even going back to the jobs that they had already retired from.

I don’t think for a minute that God caused Covid-19, but he is certainly working in the background eradicating it.

Praise be to God!