

Dear Parishioners,

I hope you are all keeping well, and have adapted to our new way of living in these difficult times. You continue to be in my prayers, especially in the Mass which I offer each day for you – though behind closed doors. It all feels so strange! But as to the opening our Churches, there does seem to be a glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel. A recent letter from Bishop David says that there is much work going on behind the scenes between the Bishops of England and Wales and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government. We pray it will yield a positive result – and soon.

Let us be together in our prayer for all those in our parish and country who are suffering in so many different ways at this time. We remember the words of Jesus in today's Gospel: 'I WILL NOT LEAVE YOU ALONE AND ABANDONED'

**Together in Christ**  
**Fr. Frank**

#### **SIXTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR – YEAR A**

#### **I WILL NOT LEAVE YOU ALONE AND ABANDONED; I WILL COME BACK TO YOU**

**(John 14:18)**

These poignant words of Jesus to his apostles at the Last Supper are addressed to us today. Corona virus has instilled such fear into our society – the economic and the social world are in upheaval, we can't make plans for the future, we don't know when it will all end. These are indeed dark times.

As I think of this darkness, my mind goes back to the storm at sea in Mark's Gospel. (I've always had close associations with the sea since childhood, and I know very well what a severe storm is like). When the disciples set out from land everything was calm and normal. But suddenly, out of the blue, a violent storm arose – it was so severe that even these experienced fishermen were frightened out of their wits. The waves around them were so high that their skill and vast experience were of little use to them. They did their best to prevent the boat going broadside to the waves, but it was all in vain. And all this time there was Jesus asleep in the stern. In panic, they woke him up and his first words were strange, but very encouraging: 'why were you afraid', 'have you no faith'. Did you not know that when I was with you, you had nothing to fear.

Yes, Jesus is with us in this crisis we are facing – he may seem to be asleep, but he is very alert. Of course, he wants us to take all the human means we can to fight the virus, just as he expected the disciples to use their skill and experience to prevent the boat from capsizing. But ultimately it is he who will calm the storm. He has both the power to intervene and, above all, the willingness to do so, but he will do it in his own way, and within his own timeframe – if we just believe and trust in him.

And perhaps he is using this evil to bring about a new society which is more human and caring, where the values of the Gospel are more to the forefront in how we live, where we'll look beyond money and pleasure and worldly 'success' in our search for an ultimate purpose in our lives.

**FOOTPRINTS** *One night I dreamed a dream. As I walked along the beach with my Lord, across the dark sky flashed scenes from my life. For each scene, I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand – one belonging to me and one to my Lord.*

*After the last scene of my life flashed before me, I looked back at the footprints in the sand. I noticed that, at the most difficult periods in my life, there was only one set of footprints. So I said: 'Lord: I don't understand why, when I needed you most, you would leave me'.*

*He whispered: 'My child, I love you and would never leave you, especially during the times of your greatest trials. When you saw only one set of footprints, it was then that I was carrying you'*