

Thought for the day for 7<sup>th</sup> May 2020

I think today's thoughts may be a bit of a jumble and mismatch as this is now the fourth time I've attempted to start having been stopped each of the other three times by phone calls which have ofcourse been most welcome. Even now my mobile has just buzzed and I can see someone else has sent another "uplifting" video to lighten the mood.

Joan used a "secular" song on Monday, Sweet Caroline by Neil Diamond, in her Thought for the Day and it started me thinking again about how much "secular" music is "out there" which speaks to the heart and I'm certain is "God breathed". Many years ago Rev Pat Brown told me that he used the theme from the film "Titanic", sung by Celine Dion, "The Heart will go on" in his Easter Sunday service to celebrate the endless love of God. Songs like "Love changes everything" have deep Christian truths within them and "You'll never walk alone" from Carousel is perhaps particularly apt in today's circumstances.

I know that not all of you will have access to YouTube and other resources on social media and I've felt for a long time that God has given me a ministry of sharing music and videos within the worship I have the privilege to help lead in our circuit. I'm sure many of you listen to worship songs etc on CDs, radio, the internet etc. and these can inspire and lift the spirit, or sometimes calm the troubled soul and bring God's peace. Ruth used a version of the familiar song/prayer Kumbaya in her thoughts yesterday. My first reaction was, "this is a bit slow" but then I settled into the rhythm and found a sense of stillness and waiting in God's presence which led into such thoughtful prayers for others.

There are many versions of *Amazing Grace*. This song by Neil Diamond is nothing like any of them, except that it is a celebration of the saving grace of God which is the rock on which our faith stands. So I invite you to listen and hopefully enjoy - the words will be on the screen for you to follow. (there is an advert which you can click to skip after 5 secs)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9wsNtO8nYYQ>

Let's come to the God of grace as we share a prayer for ourselves, our families, friends and communities entitled "Freedom from Fear" written by Nick Fawcett:

Loving God,  
in all the changes and chances of our lives,  
all the many uncertainties we face,  
we thank you that you are a God we can depend on,  
always good, always loving, always merciful and always faithful.  
God of love,  
**for the knowledge that you are always with us, we praise you.**

We thank you for the assurance  
that, whatever we may be confronted with,  
your love will go on reaching out,  
your hand go on supporting,  
and your purpose go on being fulfilled.  
God of love,  
**for the knowledge that you are always with us, we praise you.**

Help us to truly believe that,  
not just in our minds but in our hearts,  
to put our trust wholly in you,  
confident that you will never fail us.  
God of love,  
**for the knowledge that you are always with us, we praise you.**

Help us to let go of the fears and anxieties  
that weigh us down,  
that hold us back,  
that destroy our confidence and undermine our happiness,  
that alienate us from one another  
and prevent us living life to the full.  
God of love,  
**for the knowledge that you are always with us, we praise you.**

Help us to receive the freedom you offer,  
the freedom that comes from knowing  
you hold all things in your hands  
and that nothing can finally separate us from your love.  
God of love,  
**for the knowledge that you are always with us, we praise you.**

Give us the peace Jesus promised to all who follow him,  
the knowledge that we need neither be troubled or afraid,  
for you are with us,  
watching over us now and always.  
God of love,  
**for the knowledge that you are always with us, we praise you,  
in the name of Christ. Amen.**

As our blessing I invite you to watch this video which I know a number of you have  
shared by email over the last few days:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PUt113mNj5U>