

Anglican Diocese
of Cyprus
and the Gulf

[www.cypgulf.org/
retreats](http://www.cypgulf.org/retreats)

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An Opportunity

With more time for us all to stop, reflect and pray, it may be that you would find it helpful to start journaling, jotting things down in words or pictures what seems important to you - may be questions that you have, may be realisations that you are coming to, may be poetry that suddenly needs to be composed, may be a prayer that needs to be written, not just said.

It may be too that you would like to talk about what's going on for you at this time, to try and discover where God is for you in the present crisis.

If any of you, initially in the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf, would like to have a confidential chat with someone along these lines, I would like to try and offer this opportunity to you. Please get in touch either by phone or email (see contacts above) if you would like to follow this up.

You could also call a friend to share mutually - it helps to talk.



An occasional letter 17: 17 March 2020



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Retreating in Uncertain Days

As I, like many of you, have retreated to home, having cancelled so much in the coming days, I'm pondering on the opportunity amidst uncertainty that we all now have. Could this be a time for us not just to be sensible but also to get back to the basics, to realise the gift of being still, to really know and experience that God is God for us.

It is 'interesting' that this virus has been hitting us most severely in Lent. A time which started with Jesus being led out of ordinary life, into retreat; into a hard and cruel place; into a lonely place; into a place of isolation; into a place of uncertainty; into a place of questioning; a place of pondering the future; may be a place of wondering 'where is God in it all?'

And here we are in March 2020, may be the first time for some of us when we will be forced into retreat and have the opportunity, if we wish to take it, to enter into Lent a little more fully.

Lent is not now just a giving up of coffee or chocolate - now Lent hurts as church is put on hold, meetings with friends, going out and enjoying ourselves as usual, is not possible.

The wilderness for Christ was probably a time when his senses were heightened. Out of the carpenter's workshop there was more time to notice.

More time to see the vastness of the desert, less noise in order to listen to the wind, more freedom to touch the earth, more moments to savour the freshness of any water he drank, more time to be aware of the breath that was keeping him alive in that hard place.

On retreat we often feel as though we are moving into a place of less, a returning to the basics, but it is amazing that in that place we can experience far more than we ever expected.

In these uncertain days, restricted days, days of retreat, let us be open to the more all around us - it is there! If you can, look out of the window, what have you never noticed before? Open the door, what can you hear that you never usually have space to listen to? When you drink a simple glass of water, savour it and realise what a wonderful gift this is?

As you are still, know that God is God for you, and God is God for the world - at this time.

An Exercise

In the March edition of this newsletter, I had inserted the picture below. Now all the advice is 'don't touch' and 'wash frequently'.



Yesterday, in Andrew Draper's Lent 2020 meditation he drew his virtual community to the following pen and ink drawing by Albrecht Dürer's 'Praying Hands', from 1508.



You may like to spend some time looking at these two pictures, listening to what God may be wanting to say to you over this enforced retreat time.

Is there anything God would like you to recognise about your hands, his hands and the hands of others?