

Friday Evening Message – 29 May 2020



When invited to contribute a Friday evening message, I said of course, with some alacrity. Such a small request, in the scheme of things. But what to say, that hasn't been said before? What tone to take during this time of uncertainty?

I will begin by saying I know, that I am luckier than many. And so I am offended by those who suggest that the pandemic is some kind of great leveller...like death itself. Not true! We know, now, what we might have ignored before, and that is that death and disease are more likely to come to some, than to others...the most marginalised, whether because of their race, ethnicity, economic status, where they live and what they eat. We know that for some, the lockdown is a greater burden, especially for those living alone or in tower blocks in congested cities or worse, with abusive partners. For the elderly in care homes and for those who care for them, because of the government's failure to provide the necessary PPE to safeguard them.

A friend, the parish priest in Lockerbie when Pan Am 103 was blown up in a terrorist atrocity in 1988, wrote to me recently, and expressed the hope that some good will come out of all this, "...namely that there is a greater concern and response to the whole population and in particular to the marginalised, poor and vulnerable."

With that in mind, I quote from BBC correspondent George Alagiah who has been battling bowel cancer for 6 years and shared his thoughts on the coronavirus on Radio 4 recently. He told us what he will tell to his granddaughter when this is over; "I'll cuddle her," he said, "and whisper, although she won't understand, how we lost some of our best to the virus, yet because of it, we may yet find the best in each other."

Last Shabbos when Peter asked what was new, in order to get a conversation rolling, I mentioned the return of the cuckoo. That may not mean much to many of you. But to me it means a lot. All the way from Africa, that plucky little bird arrives every year, like clockwork, in search of a mate. And that is reassurance enough for me, that all is still right in the world. While some things may change, others do not, and in times like these, that is a great comfort. This is not the world's first pandemic, nor will it be the last. Let us, as a community, do as George Alagiah suggests, and search out the best in each other, because like my friend Father Keegans says, I too, continue to live in hope.

Stay safe. Be Well.

P.S. Please accept my photo of the greylags and their goslings in lieu of the cuckoo which I hear, but never see.

Linda

Norwich Liberal Jewish Community

norwichljc.org.uk

