

Salvation Army Hadleigh Temple Songsters

Pause for Thought Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2020

As 'lockdown' continues with some reduction in restrictions life remains very different from our usual way of life. I trust all is well with you and those within your circle.

Thank you to Shelley for preparing Pause for Thought last week.

In his book 'Encounters' Eddie Askew asks us to imagine we are at the pool of Bethesda. This was a last-hope place full of last-hope people. Bethesda means 'House of Grace' or 'House of Mercy', as we imagine there must have been tension there all the time. These were people who tried everything, who had gone through the misery of illness and pain and must have reached the point of 'we've tried everything else', let's try the waters. No doubt some were still optimistic, and others despaired, as most people believed that when the water in the pool swirled and bubbled the first person in the water could be cured whatever the illness. The water was unpredictable, and you had to be ready for the next disturbance as no one knew when this was going to be. It must have made Bethesda a place of tension, anxiety and lacking in compassion.

Today during the epidemic we know that there have been many deeds of kindness and true compassion for those in need around us. It seems that values have changed and there must have been a change in many people to understand what is important in life.

Many of us would have had experience when Jesus walks in, quietly, unobtrusively and unrecognised.

R.S. Thomas, the Welsh Christian poet, writes of this quiet coming of Christ:

As I had always known

He would come, unannounced, remarkable, merely for the absence of clamour.

That is often the way with Jesus.

As we celebrate the time of Pentecost giving us the gift of the Holy Spirit, may we recognise this in our lives whatever the circumstances, summed up in the words of Albert Orsborn.

Come, Holy Spirit and abide with me,

My heart is longing to confide in thee;

Such a wonderful grace thou has provided me;

Holy Spirit, abide with me.

May this be our prayer at all times.

Thank you, Father God for giving us Jesus and your Holy Spirit.

Keep safe and well.

LOUISE