

## A NEW SONG – A reflection



I'm sitting here watching two blackbirds perched on high spots at each end of the garden, having a gossip – at least that's what it sounds like – chat, reply, chat – reply, one can almost envy them their freedom to socialize! Zoom, Facetime, Skype & other electronic means of staying in touch have been (literally) a Godsend in these trying times, but it doesn't compensate for the subtle nuances that make up satisfying human interaction – gestures and facial expressions, that enrich the conversation (or not!), and of course there's the frustration of delay on the line and you don't know if you've talked over someone's response and missed something important.

Is it a good thing to sit and contemplate the things we are missing? Perhaps it's physical contact, watching or being part of seeing young family members grow, sharing together, everyday conversations, being with elderly relatives, going out on a whim.....Perhaps we are missing the rhythm of life as we knew it. The familiar 'landscape' has changed and, let's face it, we didn't have time to adjust before lockdown.

Is there something that, perhaps, you're *not* missing? Getting up in the morning to a full diary? Or feeling you should be somewhere doing something (but, in my case, you can't remember what!) The rush round the supermarket has now turned into a processing crawl and I actually come out the other end feeling quite relaxed and wanting this slow pace to continue. Having the time to plan meals more carefully, ensuring there's less food wastage. Time to enjoy being in the garden and noticing the subtle daily changing of the seasons. Maybe you now have the opportunity to find a different, slower rhythm to your day. Maybe, (and I haven't consulted our young families on this one!) you are actually enjoying learning along with your kids as you are home schooling. Maybe there's space to breathe deeply and consider what is really important to you in your life. Maybe it's time for a new 'song'.

I have a Christmas card (see illustration last page) pinned to my notice board in a prominent position. It's from Psalm 98:1 but there are several Biblical references to 'song', which is a word used often as a metaphor in the Bible for a new way of 'being' and 'thinking':

**Ps 48: 1**                    ***"Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvellous things".***

**Ps 40: 3**                ***"..... he put a new song in my mouth....."***

Maybe its time to re-align ourselves to the will of God – to sing a 'new song'.

Some people of a certain age (and mine is fast approaching!), might remember a phrase which appeared in the days when TV communications often broke down:

**"NORMAL SERVICE WILL BE RESUMED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE"**

These words came to mind when contemplating what 'normal' will look like after lockdown ends. Apart from the fact that we were told when I was doing my teacher training, "there's no such thing as normal!", the phrase being used by the media is 'the new normal', implying that things will never be 'as they were', again. In essence, the 'landscape' as we know it, will have changed, and we need to prepare ourselves for 'dewing diffrent", as the Norfolk expression goes. The fact is that normal service as we know it, will not be resumed in many aspects of our lives. I could list many aspects I would wish (pray) to see changed, but, as this is not a party political broadcast, I will refrain, or maybe we can have those discussions at a future date , (or suggestions on a postcard please). One thing that I have come to understand, is that God is shaking the foundations of our heavily scheduled, over-busy, self-destructive lives. Here's a big truth: our loving God and creator knows our needs before we do. Indeed, he is calling (shouting?) for us to pay attention to the truths expressed in the Bible, for our well-being and flourishing. (2 Chronicles 7:14)

When we eventually emerge from our enforced incarceration, will we be ready (and willing?) to sing a '*new song*' – and repent of our '*old song*'? What has this defining time in our lives taught us? Will we resolve to re-evaluate our priorities? Look at our consumer habits? Look at ways to live in a simpler (slower?) and more sustainable way? Change is difficult, but as St Paul says, 'If God is for us, who can be against us?' (Romans 8: 31). We can play our part by being open to God moving in these uncertain and worrying times, and responsive to the 'new song':

***....."and they sang a new song" Rev 5:9***

Is it my imagination or have the birds been more vociferous this year? They've certainly muscled in on the streamed services and audio outputs we have on the St Mary's website.

Perhaps they are trying to convey that they, too, need a new song for the planet they share with us.

***A poem by John O'Donohue***

***This is the time to be slow,  
Lie low to the wall  
Until the bitter weather passes.  
Try, as best you can, not to let  
The wire brush of doubt  
Scrape from your heart  
All sense of yourself  
And your hesitant light.  
If you remain generous,  
Time will come good;  
And you will find your feet  
Again on fresh pastures of promise,  
Where the air will be kind  
And blushed with beginning.***

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***And finally, one of my favourite '4<sup>th</sup> Sunday @ 10' sending out songs.....***

***Jesus put this song into our hearts  
Jesus put this song into our hearts  
It's a song of joy no one can take away  
Jesus put this song into our hearts.***

***Jesus taught us how to live in harmony  
Jesus taught us how to live in harmony  
Different faces, different races, he made us one  
Jesus taught us how to live in harmony.***

***Jesus taught us how to be a family  
Jesus taught us how to be a family  
Loving one another with the love that he gives***

*Jesus taught us how to be a family.*

*Jesus turned our sorrows into dancing*

*Jesus turned our sorrows into dancing*

*Changed our tears of sadness into rivers of joy*

*Jesus turned our sorrows into dance.*

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