

Well this is now the third Reflection for Today, and I'm wondering how many I will have written by the time there's no need to write them anymore!

There's a saying that goes "*Absence makes the heart grow fonder*" Can't say that it is taken from the Bible but I believe it is a true saying along with others like "*What you've never had – you never miss*" and "*You won't appreciate it until it's gone!*"

People have been very ingenuitive during the last few weeks of social isolation and are now using various technologies to keep in touch with their friends and families – it's impressive that when "*needs must*" we, as a people tend to become very imaginative at ways of staying in communication with each other and not lose touch with those we care about.

Tomorrow is Palm Sunday. It's also the first Sunday in April so; if we had been able to meet together we would be sharing Communion. That is yet another way of being together and identifying with who we are, what we believe, and what is important to us.

There was a time in Jesus' life when, at the last supper he almost said 'Goodbye':

Matthew 26:27-31 *Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the [Some manuscripts: the new] covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, **I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom.**" When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus told them, "This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written: "**I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.**" [Zech. 13:7]*

We're blessed because we know what happened following Palm Sunday – the day when Jesus came riding on a Donkey – the crowd were enthralled, waving palm branches and laying them down to make a pathway for their coming King.

They really believed that he was coming as their Messiah and Warrior King to lead them into victory over the Romans. They were very happy and joyful, expectant and confident that everything was going their way – they were finally going to win and things were going to be just fine!

But then what? Apparently, out of nowhere things rapidly changed and their plans were thrown upside down. They wanted Jesus for their own reasons and many didn't understand that on this occasion Jesus was coming to lay down his life as a sacrifice for their sins. Many of them changed sides – from praising him to ridiculing him, from welcoming him to rejecting him.

They wanted victory not just forgiveness – they had their own plans and ideas. They were disappointed.

But like Jesus said - ***I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom.***

From the point that he left this earth – we miss Him – WE miss HIM a lot. But we must remember what he said before he left us:

John 14:18-20 *I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. **Before long, the world will not see me any more, but you will see me.** Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realise that I am in my Father, **and you are in me, and I am in you.***

Yes the witness of the Holy Spirit is a marvellous thing and fellowship with each other and sensing The Lord inhabiting the praises of His people is wonderful. But we don't like his absence; we still miss HIM don't we!

What makes things harder is not being able to meet together – remember what he said;

Matthew 18:19-20 *“Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. **For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.**”*

That's why it's so painful if you're being 'locked down' with no one you can pray with, and how blessed we are if we a locked down with someone we CAN pray with! Don't neglect that blessing if you have it!

So what about those who are pining for Jesus alone? Who are lovesick for Him and are suffering due to the lack of fellowship we have to endure these days?

There's something for you too:

Matthew 6:6 *But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. **Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.***

Don't miss an opportunity to receive a blessing!

Is it wrong to miss him SO much? Are we weak because we can't stop thinking about him? – I don't think so, and this is why. I believe He is coming for us soon, so we should be like the apostle Paul speaking to Timothy:

2Timothy 4:7-8 *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day — **and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.***

Is His absence making your heart grow fonder? – Do you feel like a scattered sheep? – It's ok - the Shepherd is coming for those who long for His appearing!

Until we meet again, stay safe and God Bless,

Rob