

## FROM OUR MINISTER



We all like to feel part of a community. Probably the deepest longing of the human heart is to have significant relationships in which to feel safe and secure, trusted and accountable, honest and open and above all in which to love and be loved.

This is partly why lockdown was so hard for some people. They were cut off from many of their relationships and communities. Many were unable to go out at all and most were unable to meet people beyond their immediate household for weeks or months.

The flip side was that some relationships received more attention than usual. With the use of technology some families were seeing more of one another in weekly video calls than they would have done in 'normal' times.

Whichever way it has affected you those significant relationships that are safe and secure, trusted and accountable, honest and open in which you can love and be loved will have been more difficult to maintain. Either because of isolation or because it is harder over the internet than it is in person. A 'virtual hug' is not quite the same as a physical one; a 'distant hug' is not the same as one with contact.

These significant relationships are ones in which no one is superior or arrogant but in which each party has a humble attitude of service to the others. This enables all members to derive life-giving freedom from and give life-giving freedom to each other. In true community each person can use their gifts and talents to the full – they can be fully human. It is the kind of unity to which the Church aspires, and not surprisingly, because it is the kind of unity we find in God as Trinity in unity.



It is natural for human beings to yearn for community because we were created in the image of God who is himself community. That is one of the reasons we have been so pleased to be able to return to church buildings. It is not that we need to be there to worship and prayer, but that we long to be able to do it together, meet one another and relate to one another. The problem is that human selfishness and pride cause the breakdown of relationships both with God and one another.

The solution to the problem is Jesus' cross – the ideal symbol for the healing of relationships both vertically with God and horizontally with one another.

Humanly speaking there are two things to do:

- accept that Jesus' death and resurrection have made the healing of relationships possible;
- lose no opportunity for the building of relationships in community both physically and virtually

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