

WEEKEND GREETINGS FROM THE MINISTER - 25 APRIL 2020

Posted on April 25, 2020 by Andrew Brown

Greetings to you all once again.

As always I trust you and yours remain as well as you can be under the current circumstances. I have greatly valued and enjoyed talking to those whom I have managed to contact this week and I very much look forward to being in touch with the rest of you once again in the coming couple of weeks.

As you will now all realise, my hope to be in touch with you all at least every two weeks has not come to pass because a fortnight ago I had to go down to London with Susanna to help to look after her dying daughter. Inevitably, this has taken up nearly all of my days and energy. The sad news I bring this weekend is that on Tuesday Lucy died. Thank you for all your kind words of love and support up to this point and thank you, too, in advance, for the kind words of love and support I know many of you will, in time, send to Susanna.

The pandemic has, as you might imagine, also made all post-mortem arrangements very difficult to organise and so I'm afraid that for another couple of weeks at least Susanna and I will need to remain in London.

All along the way we have been grateful beyond measure to the District Nurses and various members of the Palliative Care Teams who came out to visit us many times in the last couple of weeks in what was for them, and us, an exceptionally difficult and distressing situation (both at the flat and, of course, in the wider community). I know many of you will have been applauding our NHS workers every Thursday for their selfless, kind and brave work during this crisis. However, as I, too, have clapped (and as did Lucy with us a number of times) I have been powerfully struck by the realization that mere claps and promised future bonuses' are utterly inadequate. I trust that as we finally move through the first part of this crisis we will all begin to find ways to apply great pressure to our government to put

permanent measures in place which ensure that these extraordinary people (along with countless other, genuinely key workers in the emergency services, care sector, retail etc., etc.) are finally given the proper respect, equipment and pay rises that they have consistently been denied them in the name of private profit and a decades long, unnecessary policy of austerity tied to the [deliberate plundering of the commons](#) As Miguel De La Torre ([to whom I introduced you a couple of weeks ago in my Easter Weekend piece](#)) points out, Jesús—whom we in our church tradition take as our central paradigm of how to be in the world ourselves—Jesús does more than simply show empathy for the poor and oppressed, more than simply express some paternalistic concern. Jesús *is* the poor and oppressed. “In as much as you did it to one of these, the least of my people, you did it to me” (Mt. 25:40)’ ([The Politics of Jesús - A Hispanic Political Theology](#), p. 42) Given these words of Jesús I beg your forgiveness and understanding in making a passionate plea that each of us individually actively finds ways to ensure that from this moment on our society as a whole pays far, far greater attention to the poor and oppressed (which so depressingly includes most of those whom we are now realising are key to our collective well-being and health) than it (and many of us individually) did previously.

As we enter into the fifth week of the lockdown one thing is clear, namely, that when we are finally allowed to meet together in person once again well be in a very different cultural, political, financial and, perhaps, religious situation than before. For a long time now I’ve been wondering what kind of church we should (could) be in the future and my addresses to you have been littered for years with thoughts about this. As I was pondering the question yet again (but with no time or energy to write something new for you) I recalled an address I gave back in 2018 called:

[The quiet opening To be that porous, to have such largeness pass through me A meditation on what the coming liberal religion might feel like](#)

As [with last week's offering from the archive](#) it strikes me as (possibly) saying something positive, uplifting and useful to the current situation but, as always, that is for you to decide and not for me to demand or expect . . .

So, until next week and/or when we talk by telephone I wish you as fruitful a week as possible.

Love and best wishes as always,

Andrew

PS. Some of you have been kind enough to say that you enjoy my photography. If that includes you do then you might like to know I regularly post photographs on my Twitter account which you can find by clicking the following link:

<https://twitter.com/caute>

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