

DAILY BREAD #129

an extra slice



Faith at Home – Being Church Beyond the Building – United in Prayer

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

All may, some should, none must

This is an old saying often used to describe understandings of private confession (or the sacrament of reconciliation) outside of the gathered liturgy. Confession is held by many Christians as an important part of their spiritual lives. It has much to do with healing the Body of Christ rather than the stuff of personalised lists of things we ought not to have done.

Christianity isn't a private nor individualistic hobby. Just as Christians should comment on issues the world faces (because God loves the world and offers salvation to it), our faith also calls us to look at how our lives touch other lives and how we consider the needs of our neighbours as well as ourselves.

In response to a new year spike of Covid-19 and the implications that has on the NHS and transmission of the virus, many places of worship have elected to close doors, despite being allowed to remain open. The shutting of doors is never done lightly, nor is it a simple policy to enforce or receive. The Church is not closed even if there are restrictions on gathering as we would wish. At the moment, we are not compelled to close but we all might approach the issue with the same maxim of *All may, some should, none must*; and in the same way that some examine themselves in relation to our neighbour, prepare to make an honest, prayerful and informed decision. (Things move fast at the moment so this might be out of date by the time it is read.)



The Church has just celebrated the Epiphany and the Baptism of Christ, both joyful and holy events followed by, respectively, a desperate flight into Egypt and time of uncertain exile; and a time of testing in the wilderness. Each episode, a period of unspecified time at the outset, is linked by the powerful truth that the Holy Family and the adult Jesus were not alone. Our nation was reminded of that same truth, simply yet fervently made, by HM the Queen in her Christmas Message.

As we enter into another lockdown the *Daily Bread* series will begin again, with weekly instalments on a Wednesday, and with them a call to light a candle and to pray. Christmas lights went up early in 2020, perhaps we might consider some Candlemas lights for February? This call to prayer is an invitation that *all may, some should, none must* take part in. Like all of what we do in our spiritual lives we as Christians hold it, together with others; we bear the weight, together with others; and with all the peoples of the world we are in God's hands.

Closing Prayer

Loving Living God, amid another countrywide lockdown we hold our lives, our community and our world before you in prayer.

Keep us, under the shadow of your loving goodness. Sustain and support the anxious, be with those who care for the sick, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may find comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.