

Dear Parishioners

In 1 Thessalonians 5:11, Paul says:” *Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.*”



Our familiar world has been thrown upside down by the pandemic – you and I have had to make enormous adjustments in our lives. We have no idea of the final scale of Cavod-19 or when we will see the end of it.

I have been hugely blessed by your prayers and good wishes and have had a lot of time to ponder a great many things.

Firstly, the pandemic has made us aware of the needs of others, especially those who are ill or at risk. This in turn has encouraged us to pray more and care more. This must not stop when the pandemic ends!

So, did the sheer volume and intensity of prayer on my behalf speed up my healing or convince God to treat me differently to similar sufferers, some of whom died?

Not at all. Prayer is not twisting God’s arm to achieve something we would like to see. Nor does God answer the prayers of the godly ahead of the pleas of the irreligious. So, what does the prayer of the righteous man and woman achieve?

My testimony is quite simply that I was flooded with joy, even when days were very dark. Joy that came from the Holy Spirit, not from mind over matter or chemicals.

I was supported by a power greater than myself, God’s love, which you ministered to me through your prayers. One sometimes reads that in days gone by, the patient “turned her face to the wall and died.”

Despair and the course of the illness triumphed.

When we support and encourage one another, we channel God’s healing and love and joy into the situation. Not because the patient deserves it, but because God is love.

I pray your faith and mine will be strengthened in spite of the many challenges we face at present. I look forward eagerly to the day when our bishop permits us to worship together on a Sunday once more.

Our confirmation candidates will be given a new date for their confirmation and we can be fed with the bread of heaven at the Lord's Table on the first day of the week.

Perhaps we will never take these privileges for granted again. Perhaps we will be drawn closer to Christians who are persecuted and cannot worship openly.

God has shown me two important things during my convalescence:

1. I am entitled to His mercy and forgiveness. Anything else is in His hands at His discretion.
2. Joy is otherworldly gift no unbeliever can ever know.

Open yourselves to God's mercy, live penitentially, be filled with joy (especially when there seems little reason to be joyful), and encourage one another in word and deed.

God bless you 'til we meet again

Father Klaus

