

LIGHTS OF LOVE

A reflection to help us at this time from Deacon Maggie Blake

On Sunday evening at 7.00pm Christians across the country lit candles and placed them in their windows to show solidarity and love at this very difficult time.

It reminded me of a very moving ceremony we used at the Hospice where I worked as a chaplain. It was called the "Lights of Love" and people paid for a light on the Christmas tree to remember their loved ones who had gone to glory. I believe our candles are all about Lights of Love.

We can blow out the flame of our candles and switch off the power supply to the lights in the house, but we cannot extinguish light. Light travels on out into space into eternity and cannot be extinguished. What a scary thought that every episode of East Enders is still out there somewhere, waiting for some un-suspecting alien.

By the same token the light of our love is with those who are sick, bereaved and helping to care for us all during the coronavirus outbreak across the world.

This experience of lock down will be something we will not forget and will be mentioned for years to come, before Covid-19 or just after Covid-19, it will go on regardless -- just as that light continues to travel through space.

Darkness is simply the absence of light -if you put a torch into a box the light is not extinguished, it permeates the darkness, even though we cannot see it for the moment, because it is blocked out by the container, but that does not mean that the light is not there.

I don't suppose I am the only one who, as a child, worked tirelessly to try to find out if the light in the fridge really did go out when the door was closed. The light pierces the darkness and that is something to focus on in these dark and scary times -- letting the light of all, continue to shine through our darkness.

The symbolism of light is a very powerful one. The fact that we use lights to decorate our homes at festival times is a use of that symbolism leading us on to the festivities and the hope of what is to come.

Light is a universally acknowledged symbol of love and care. If we were to try to put that love into action in our daily lives, we find that it is composed of things like thoughtfulness, kind words, sympathy and understanding, gentleness and a desire to make the world a better place in which to live. All these are the lights of love and they too, live on forever.

So if the light of a candle is never extinguished, then equally the

light of love cannot be extinguished for God is Love -- however we interpret God and in the scriptures of all religions, we are assured that God is eternal.

Just as when bees are making honey, we cannot tell from which particular flower they have drawn their nectar, one thing we do know is that they have all worked together to blend the nectar to make something wholesome and lovely.

So here we are coming together through symbolism as we cannot physically meet, to acknowledge the love of those we are thinking of at this time. the love and influence they are having on our lives as they take risks for others and as a commitment to ensuring that their light travels ever onward.

So, thank you all for enabling your own light to shine on in our world and for sharing something of your love with each other throughout whatever lies ahead.

Let the light of Christ shine from us all as we seek to care and pray for one another.