



## Reflections

# Staying healthy and happy

MY thoughts and prayers go out to those who have died of the virus but I am equally concerned about those who, like me, are struggling to cope with this precarious situation.

We are so lucky to have well organised voluntary groups in this part of the country, caring neighbours and fantastic friends who go out of their way to help those of us in need.

In this article, I want to share my own experience of coping at this challenging time, which some read-

ers might find helpful.

I rushed back from India after the loss of my own father earlier in March, while still in mourning for him, I had to put myself in self-isolation.

For someone with a personality like mine, who is also an outdoors person, it was pretty unbearable at the beginning; the internet went down, the phone line collapsed, and the heating would go off every half hour.

After a couple of days when the phone and the internet were reinstated, I was flooded with a tsunami of

sadness and grief from the isolation. There were over 40 requests from people of our parish and visitors for prayers for those who had died or were suffering seriously with Covid-19 or other illnesses.

In addition the demands of isolation meant there were no visits to parishioners, even for emergencies. Sadly during this time two of our devout parishioners passed away.

One of the riches of my pastoral ministry, which I will always cherish, is to have accompanied dying parishioners in the last minutes of their earthly life but at this time I

was forbidden for that noble ministry.

Although I moved on to doing services online, it is still very difficult to manage the lack of emotional connections with the physical presence of people and places.

I have become aware of the need for inner strength to survive this situation. Certainly the ten tips from the NHS can help us survive Covid-19 but beyond these it is my faith that kept, and keeps, sustaining me. I remember someone once said to me, 'Faith is like wifi. It is invisible but it has the power to connect you'.

Interestingly these days it is wifi that is connecting our faith.

I personally believe we all need faith at the moment. Faith in our system, medical professionals, police, politicians and ultimately in God to keep us all safe and healthy at this time of challenge and difficulty. 'Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen' (Hebrews 11:1).

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