



# St Mary the Virgin Baldock



## “Building with Christ”

### Rector’s Blog – day 29

Dear Friends

One of the shortest (and in my view one of the greatest) book of the Old Testament.

#### **Jonah, chapter 3, verses 1 - 5**

*The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time, saying, 2‘Get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you.’ 3So Jonah set out and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly large city, a three days’ walk across. 4Jonah began to go into the city, going a day’s walk. And he cried out, ‘Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!’ 5And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth.*

Ninevah was a cosmopolitan, bustling, wealthy city. Huge in those days, it took three days to walk across it. Everywhere there was trade. People making money, building their family inheritance. The economy was booming.

Jonah went and proclaimed judgement. It wasn't one person in particular. Nor even one section of society. The whole point of the Book of Jonah is that God's love and guidance is for everyone, not just the favoured few. The problem was a self-centred sickness in society. And everyone, great and small, repented and put on sackcloth.

Can we draw parallels here? Corona is not one person's fault, nor even one section of society. There's no merit in trying to pin the blame on a hapless stall in a Chinese animal market when we are the ones who travel to the other side of the world and bring the virus back. There's no merit in accusing others of breaking lockdown in this country or elsewhere for we are the ones who allow others to queue for us, risk their lives for us in hospital. There is very little we can do about it. It is the way society works but it is a malaise of society. The problem is the human race not just a few individuals. Is the Corona virus a judgement on the self-centred and self-important human race as a whole?

Jonah was sent to preach judgement on the city of Ninevah. The people repented and without giving away the denouement of the story, God changed his mind and the city was not destroyed.

Jesus died as a judgement against God. People decided he was to be a scapegoat who, as Caiaphas prophesied, was to die for the people so that the nation would not be destroyed. (John 11: 49, 50). His resurrection is the assurance that God's love overcomes all judgement, all scapegoats. But in order for that to be relevant and true in human life, we have to turn towards Jesus and put on sackcloth, repent and live by a new set of values.

If the Corona virus is a warning about judgement on the human race and the way we are living, will we repent and put on sackcloth?

#### **Here is a children's bedtime prayer.**

*Before the ending of the day, Creator of the world, we pray*

*That you, with steadfast love, would keep Your watch around us while we sleep.*

*Tonight we pray especially for (names family or friends who are affected by Coronavirus) and the people of (country or place which is affected by Coronavirus). Please give skill and wisdom to all who are caring for them. Amen.*

**And here is the picture of Jonah being thrown out of the whale by Peter Lastman 1621** You can think of God's perseverance in setting the city of Ninevah on a more sensible footing!



Every blessing  
Andrew



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**If you would like to join us for Evening Prayer on Wednesday it is at 5.00pm**

The link is

Topic: Wednesday Evening Prayer via Zoom  
Time: Apr 29, 2020 17:00 London

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/71448820069?pwd=V3ViNjNhdW12TjZna1g0T0JBOXBsUT09>

Meeting ID: 714 4882 0069

Password: 7r1qkK

The times for Evening Prayer for the rest of the week are as follows:

Thursday 5.00pm

Friday 5.00pm (contact Katrina)

Saturday 5.00pm

Sunday 6.00pm