



Image of the day - Wells Cathedral

Presbyterian concern for the post Brexit path

Speaking about the ongoing tensions linked to Brexit, the Northern Ireland Protocol and its outworking, the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Right Reverend Dr David Bruce, has appealed to those with responsibility for finding the necessary solutions to work together, even if at times that means disagreeing well.

He also condemned the use of threats against politicians and others, over recent weeks, and urged his fellow Christians not to shirk their responsibility to pray for those whose job it is to find the necessary workable solutions.

“All of us in these islands have a responsibility to encourage the kind of dialogue that leads to fruitful engagement and resolution, and when this is difficult, and tensions are shifting, we have a responsibility to seek agreement and, where that is not immediately possible, to disagree well,” Dr Bruce said.

“Disagreeing well is an essential element of democracy. It means being careful with our words and use of language so as not to inflame any given situation. It also means being careful not to back other people into corners leaving them with no way out. To disagree well means being honest in our politics and gracious towards one another, even when we are not starting from the same place. Disagreeing well is part of the process that ultimately enables agreements to be made.”

March 10, 2021

Dr Bruce continued by saying, “Disagreeing well also means that people should never be intimidated or threatened. Tensions linked to Brexit and the Northern Ireland Protocol, for instance, over recent weeks, have led to threats against some of our elected representatives and others, which I utterly condemn. Tactics like these are anti-



democratic and have absolutely no place in any society, more so in these days when people are working day and night to preserve life.

Shifting tensions always make the ability to find solutions more difficult.

“Shifting tensions always make the ability to find solutions more difficult. I certainly do not underestimate the difficulties involved. However, I appeal to those tasked with finding

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March 10, 2021

solutions to do so thinking of the other, alongside their own deeply held positions, so that local tensions, or political strains between states, diminish. The challenges faced as a result of changing political relationships will be resolved because they have to be – none of us will emerge well if they are not - from the pensioner doing their weekly shop to the trader doing business across jurisdictions.

I appeal to those with responsibility for finding the necessary solutions to work together, even if on occasions that means disagreeing well.

Dr Bruce went on to say, “I appeal to those with responsibility for finding the necessary solutions to work together, even if on occasions that means disagreeing well. At the same time I, along with my fellow Christians, have a responsibility to pray for those in authority, something that cannot be shirked. We do so in the firm belief that prayer materially affects the course of human events. Prayer changes things, and as we are invited by God to tell Him what we think and how we feel, He hears our passion and our pain, our hopes and our fears.

“As a follower of Jesus Christ, and as a Church leader in these particular days, I want to encourage all my brothers and sisters in Christ to pray for the UK and Irish governments, the Northern Ireland Executive and the EU Commission, praying that they will find a way to move forward together as we work out these new political relationships. Disagreeing well, with all of its challenges, is important part of that process, which will, I pray, eventually enable agreement to be found,” he said.

March 10, 2021

Safeguarding resources developed especially for young people

The Church of England is investing in a groundbreaking programme of safeguarding training and resources, created especially for children and young people.

The project was the brainchild of Becca Faal, Safeguarding Officer for the Diocese of Gloucester and founder of the Faal Safeguarding Consultancy.

Becca said, “Previous safeguarding training in the Church has been aimed solely at adults, but this doesn’t go far enough. It’s really important that everyone in our worshipping communities is informed about abuse, and



March 10, 2021

empowered with the tools they need to make our spaces as safe as possible.”

She hit on the idea while she was researching her MSc dissertation, “Can and should the Church educate children to protect themselves from abuse?”

Becca took a proposal to the Church of England National Safeguarding Team and secured funding to develop resources in consultation with children and young people. 90 children across three different dioceses (church areas) helped to create the materials – children from a Sunday school, two youth groups, a Cathedral choir, a church choir, and a diocesan children and young people’s group.

The resources include a film, lesson plans and leaflets for children and their parents.

She said, “Teaching children and young people what to expect from the people around them, knowledge of healthy relationships and boundaries, and who to speak to if they feel in danger, helps them to protect themselves and others.

“When more young people are able to identify concerning behaviour and abuse and the framework in place to protect them, it allows them to be more confident in reporting and standing up to abuse.”

Lisa Clarke, National Safeguarding Learning and Development Manager, said:

“The National Safeguarding Team were very pleased to commission the development of these resources, co-

March 10, 2021

produced by children and young people for use with their peers. It is so important that children and young people are supported to recognise healthy behaviours, relationships and boundaries and have the confidence to speak out if something doesn't seem right. The resources produced are accessible and high quality and we are proud to have them available on the Safeguarding Training Portal.”

The resources give youth workers, leaders of children's groups and Parish Safeguarding Officers an accessible and relevant way to share these important messages with young people and to open up conversations. They are designed to be used across worshipping communities within the Church of England, such as churches, schools, chaplaincies and youth groups.

08/03/2021 - The resources are free to download through the Church of England Safeguarding portal -
[[<https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org/>]

York Minster's Grand Organ returns at heart of worship

York Minster's newly refurbished Grand Organ was blessed on Sunday last (7 March) and is being played at services throughout Lent following the completion of work on a once-a-century project.

A prayer was said for the organ during the cathedral's livestreamed Eucharist service at 11am, before it was played for the first time during worship since 2018.



The blessing was the first step in marking the completion of the £2m refurbishment project, allowing the instrument to be played at services throughout Lent before the dedication of the organ by the Archbishop of York at Evensong on Easter Day (Sunday 4 April).

The instrument was last played during worship in October 2018 before work began to remove the organ, including nearly all of its 5,000 plus pipes, so it could be taken to organ specialists in Durham for cleaning, repair and replacement.

The work has included bringing the majority of the organ's 102 decorative case pipes back into use, which have been silent since the last major refurbishment in 1903.

Robert Sharpe, York Minster's Director of Music, said: "We're delighted to be able to bring the Grand Organ back into regular use at the heart of worship at the cathedral. It will be a gentle return in March due to the solemnity of the

March 10, 2021

season of Lent, but building to a celebration on Easter Day when the organ will be dedicated by the Archbishop of York.

“The refurbishment preserves the unique sound of the Minster’s organ whilst renewing its mechanism. Work has included bringing many of the 102 case pipes which have been silent since 1903 back into use and restoring the grander, imposing qualities of the instrument which were altered during work in the 1960s.

“Organ music has played a central role in worship at York Minster for nearly 1,000 years and we hope this project will help ensure that tradition continues throughout the 21st century and beyond.”

The work to refurbish the organ, which dates from the early 1830s and is one of the largest cathedral organs in the country, weighing approximately 20,000kg, has been completed by Durham-based organ specialists Harrison and Harrison.

The team removed the organ in October 2018 and transported it to their warehouse in Durham so they could undertake work to replace the organ’s mechanism and clean and overhaul the instrument.

In 2019 and early 2020 parts of the organ were returned to the Minster, including the 102 decorative case pipes which are among the oldest surviving pipes in the organ, dating from 1832.

During the refurbishment 30 of the original case pipes were found to be beyond economic repair and were replaced,

March 10, 2021

with the originals auctioned to help raise funds to support the project.

In autumn 2019 and early 2020, graining and marbling specialists Robert Woodland & Son cleaned and repainted the original case pipes and decorated the new, replacement pipes to match the originals.

Work on the refurbishment project briefly paused in March 2020 due to the Coronavirus pandemic, before the instrument was rebuilt between June and October 2020.

Between November 2020 and February 2021 experts worked to 'voice' the organ, a process which involves making sure all 5,000 pipes play the correct note, pitch and volume.

The project has also included creating a new music library underneath the organ, behind the Pulpitum – known as the Kings' Screen - the 15th century stone screen which separates the Minster's Quire from the Nave.

The organ will be dedicated by the Archbishop of York at an Evensong service on Easter Day (Sunday 4 April) and a programme of events to celebrate the organ's return will be announced later this year.

York Minster is currently livestreaming its Sunday services at 11am and 4pm each week via its website at www.yorkminster.org and will reopen for public and private worship from Sunday 14 March.

Books, Broadcasts, resources and webinars

Festival at Home from Cliff College

Contributors for Festival at Home 2021 include Gavin Calver (Evangelical Alliance), Dot Tyler (Tearfund), Pete Dawson (Ivy Church Manchester) and Jessica Bond (Christ Church Spitalfields). The live programme will be full of worship, teaching, prayer and encouragement from Christians across the country. There will also be dedicated content for children and young people, seminars, contributions from Festival partners All We Can and the Connexional Team of the Methodist Church, and much more. Available 29-31 May 2021 on Facebook, YouTube and the Cliff College website. For more information, visit Cliff College website, follow on Facebook or subscribe to their YouTube channel. Send us any questions at festivalathome@cliffcollege.ac.uk.

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https://cliffcollege.ac.uk/cliff-festival?utm_source=Premier%20Christian%20Media&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=12222002\Cliff%20College%2008%2F03%2F20&utm_content=text&dm_i=16DQ,79YK2,K9APJB,TI761,1]

Anglican Communion at the UN

The 65th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women is 2.5 weeks away. The Anglican Communion has brought a delegation to UNCSW for over 20 yrs. In 2021 its delegates will participate in CSW65 virtually!

Stay tuned for more info and updates



The Face of God - a recently released film

Features Orthodox Christian perspectives from North America on climate change. The film presents reflections based on the experience and responses from Orthodox communities on the ecological crisis.

Voices of clergy and lay leaders, scientists and theologians, as well as parish communities, focus on ecology, theology, and our relationship to the natural world. From the melting permafrost that threatens parishes in Alaska, the wildfires that ravaged California in 2020, and to the south, where hurricanes are becoming stronger and deadlier, communities throughout the world face the rising impacts of global climate change.

March 10, 2021

Produced by The Orthodox Fellowship of the Transfiguration, this pan-Orthodox film is introduced by Archbishop Elpidophoros, Primate of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, and narrated by John Chryssavgis.

“The film depicts the beauty and sacredness of the natural environment, the importance, and urgency of creation care, as well as the responsibility of all of us, to preserve God’s creation,” Chryssavgis said, as one of the film co-producers. oikoumene.org/news/new-film

WCC Webinar will “read the signs of the times” as COVID-19 pandemic stretches into one year

A 15 March webinar coordinated by the World Council of Churches (WCC) will, one year into the COVID-19 pandemic, explore the “signs of the times” with an eye for social justice, following a year of suffering and disruption for many around the world.

According to WHO data, over the past year there have been over 99 million cases with over 2 million deaths. The wider impacts of the pandemic have affected almost all areas of life, and thrown pre-existing inequality and discrimination into even sharper relief. In collaboration with its global ecumenical partners WCC aims at galvanizing mutual solidarity and support as an affirmation of our common human fragility which this pandemic has exposed.

With a focus on public witness and diakonia issues, the webinar will present up-to-date information on the pandemic, its impacts and the global response.

March 10, 2021

Among other aspects, the webinar will highlight impacts and challenges in the spheres of mental health, vaccines, the situation of frontline health workers, the wider social and economic consequences, and the special impact on children and youth.

Speakers will include intergovernmental partners, as well as senior representatives of the WCC's ecumenical partner organizations. Voices of healthcare workers, the elderly, the bereaved, youth, children, and other vulnerable populations will be heard.

[[] <https://www.oikoumene.org/events/webinar-will-read-the-signs-of-the-times-as-covid-19-pandemic-stretches-into-one-year>]

Media review

Belfast church pastor received 'threats' after reopening for services

Belfast Telegraph - The pastor of a Belfast church has told of 'dirty threats' being received following a decision to restart services on Sunday. Whitewell Metropolitan Tabernacle senior pastor David Purse told those attending and those watching the service online that he had been subject to threats contained in a letter.

[<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/health/coronavirus/belfast-church-pastor-received-threats-after-reopening-for-services-40171324.html>]

Leap hermits relocating to 24-acre farm near Dunmanway

Southern Star. Press

March 10, 2021

[\[https://www.southernstar.ie/news/leap-hermits-relocating-to-24-acre-farm-near-dunmanway-4219244\]](https://www.southernstar.ie/news/leap-hermits-relocating-to-24-acre-farm-near-dunmanway-4219244)

Saint Patrick's Cathedral loses out on tourist tithes

The Liberty Press

[\[https://www.theliberty.ie/2021/03/02/saint-patricks-cathedral-loses-out-on-tourist-tithes/\]](https://www.theliberty.ie/2021/03/02/saint-patricks-cathedral-loses-out-on-tourist-tithes/)

Archdiocese advises parishes not to distribute communion or hold drive-through mass

Irish Independent

[\[https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/archdiocese-advises-parishes-not-to-distribute-communion-or-hold-drive-through-mass-40162272.html\]](https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/archdiocese-advises-parishes-not-to-distribute-communion-or-hold-drive-through-mass-40162272.html)

Violence is a betrayal of religion, Pope says in Iraq

The Irish Catholic

[\[https://www.irishcatholic.com/violence-is-a-betrayal-of-religion-pope-says-in-iraq/\]](https://www.irishcatholic.com/violence-is-a-betrayal-of-religion-pope-says-in-iraq/)

Liam Clarke: Brave journalist who exposed IRA boss 'Slab' Murphy

Irish Independent

[\[https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/news/liam-clarke-brave-journalist-who-exposed-ira-boss-slab-murphy-34317432.html\]](https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/news/liam-clarke-brave-journalist-who-exposed-ira-boss-slab-murphy-34317432.html)

NI Protocol undermines Good Friday Agreement – Jonathan Powell

The Irish News

[\[https://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2021/03/05/news/ni-protocol-undermines-good-friday-agreement-jonathan-powell-2245520/?](https://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2021/03/05/news/ni-protocol-undermines-good-friday-agreement-jonathan-powell-2245520/)

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March 10, 2021

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Comment - Jeremy Taylor: Contentedness in Hard Circumstances

The life of Jeremy Taylor (1613-67) was anything but easy. This Caroline Divine lived through decades of uproar, remaining a consistent Anglican and Royalist throughout the English Civil War, Protectorate, and Restoration. Taylor served as a chaplain to Archbishop William Laud and King Charles I, both of whom were executed, and was himself briefly imprisoned several times, Charles Hoffacker writes.

He spent years in exile at Golden Grove, the home of his patron Lord Carbery in Wales. He buried his first wife and several sons. After the Restoration, he served as a bishop in rural Ireland. His large, learned, and elegant literary legacy includes *Holy Living* and *Holy Dying*. Jeremy Taylor is honoured on August 13 in some provinces of the Anglican Communion.

Thomas K. Carroll notes that Taylor's *Holy Living* "has all the marks of an unconscious biography." Motivated perhaps by his many sorrows, Taylor included an extensive discourse on contentedness (Chapter II, Section VI) that, along with other resources, features eight "Instruments or Exercises to procure Contentedness" in the belief that chance or circumstance cannot overcome someone who is content.

The first exercise involves recognising that "everything has two handles," or at least that we have two hands by which to

March 10, 2021

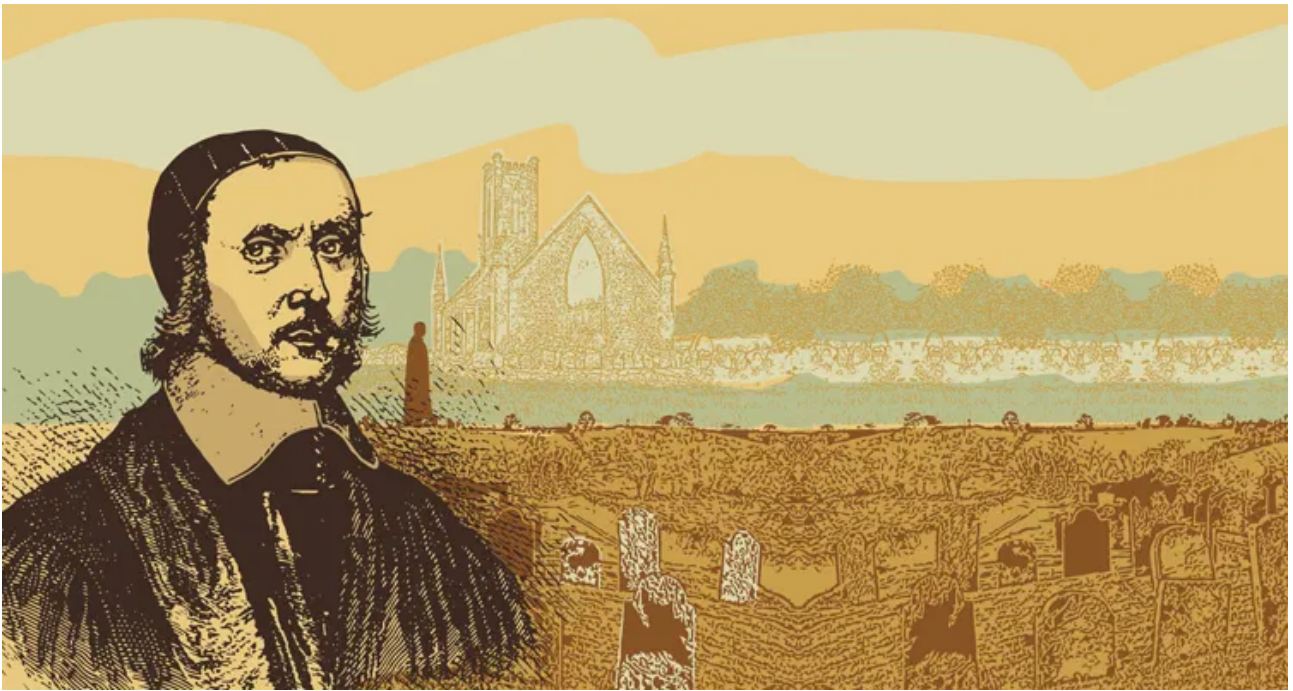
grasp it. What troubles us can be turned to our spiritual advantage. An enemy who reproaches us may supply a more helpful account of our faults than any friend. While a supporter may flatter us, an opponent teaches us how to proceed with caution. Medicine that tastes bitter may contribute to the renewal of health.

If nothing else, our misfortunes in life “may make us weary of the world’s vanity, and take off our confidence from uncertain riches; and make our spirits to dwell in those regions where content dwells essentially.”

Taylor admonishes us not to compare our condition with those in more advantageous circumstances, but instead to notice those who would gladly exchange their place for ours. To grieve over the good that others enjoy is a folly rather than to rejoice in the good that God has graciously bestowed upon us.

He then appeals to our natural self-love. Wise or good people never wish to exchange their identity or circumstances entirely for those of others. We may desire some specific good enjoyed by another. There is “no reason to take the finest feathers from all the winged nation to deck that bird that thinks already she is more valuable” than any other.

Sometimes we must shift our attention from losses and grievances and instead consider what pleases and prospers us. Then what is better blots out what is worse. Recall blessings you have received, and imagine blessings likely to appear. “It may be that thou art entered into the cloud which will bring a gentle shower to refresh thy sorrows.”



Taylor encourages Christians to reflect on what salvation promises them: “how great is that joy, how infinite is that change, how unspeakable is the glory, how excellent is the recompense for all the sufferings in the world.” Because we are but strangers traveling to our country, where the kingdom’s glories wait for us, it would be folly to be much concerned about having “a less convenient inn to lodge in by the way.”

We are advised not to sit upon our little handful of thorns. Taylor seems to imply that, even while he is exiled at Golden Grove, his life is still rich. “I sleep and digest, I eat and drink, I read and meditate, I can walk in my neighbor’s pleasant fields, and see the varieties of natural beauties, and delight in all that in which God delights, that is, in virtue and wisdom, in the whole creation, and in God himself.”

Taylor’s fourth exercise cautions us to avoid solicitude about the future. Engaging in such misguided concern “is like refusing to quench your present thirst by fearing you may”

March 10, 2021

lack drink the next day. Sorrows come soon enough, so enjoy today's blessings and bear today's evils with patience. Taylor quotes Christ: "Sufficient to the day is the evil thereof" (Matt. 6:34), noting that this evil is sufficient, not intolerable.

Another exercise is to prepare our minds for changes, always expecting them. Even when our fortunes undergo violent change, our spirits may remain content if they stand "in the suburbs and expectation of sorrows." This exercise is illustrated by a contrast between the rich man who promised himself "ease and fulfilment for many years," yet lost his fortune to death that very night (Luke 12:16-21), and the apostles "who every day knockt at the gate of death."

The troubles we now experience would appear as a welcome relief if we returned to them from a more desperate situation. If a toothache were added to our troubles, then those troubles would seem attractive by comparison. God has given us blessings, the absence of which we would feel more keenly than the difficulty we now lament. The blessings we already enjoy "deserve the thanksgiving of a whole life," regardless of whether we recognise them. Gratitude for these gifts can heal us of discontent.

To secure and maintain contentment, Taylor advises, "you must measure your desires by your fortune and condition, not your fortunes by your desires." Be governed by what you need, not by what you want. It is as easy to quench thirst from a full pitcher as from a flowing river. We make trouble for ourselves through appetites that do not originate with God or nature, whereas God and nature make no more ends than they mean to satisfy."

March 10, 2021

The final exercise is to “take sanctuary in religion” whenever we are afflicted. The anchors that secure our souls does not keep us from storm, but from shipwreck. When we suffer in a good cause, then with St. Paul let us say, “We are troubled on every side, but not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed” (2 Cor. 4:8). While contentment requires virtue, virtue does not depend on good or bad fortune. To have God’s friendship is everything.

The way of contentment is challenging. Reliable guidance proves valuable.

From his difficult life in the 17th century, Jeremy Taylor speaks words of guidance to help us live contentedly in our time, whatever our hardships may be.

The Rev. Charles Hoffacker, an Episcopal priest, lives in Greenbelt, Maryland. Courtesy The Living Church, 26. 02. 2021

Pointers to Prayer

God of Space and Time, Meet us in the place where we are today. Meet us in the place where we are And transform us by the presence of your Son. In this place, may we encounter the One who embodies your love. Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.



God of Space and Time, Meet us in the place where we are today. Meet us at the break of day And be with us in all that lies before us. In the place in which we live, may we see life renewed. Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

God of Space and Time, Meet us in the place where we are today. Meet us in the place of suffering And bring your healing presence among us. In the place of suffering, enable us to reach out to those beside us. Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

God of Space and Time, Meet us in the place where we are today. Meet us in the place of sorrow And bring your light into our darkness. In the place of sorrow, may we become bearers of your light. Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

March 10, 2021

God of Space and Time, Meet us in the place where we are today. Meet us in the rhythm of life And renew hope within us. In the community in which we live, may we bear witness to the God of hope. Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

God of Space and Time, Meet us in the place where we are today. Meet us at the close of day And be with us through the night. Keep us safe and bring us to the dawn of a new day. Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

Speaking to the Soul

He was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed. All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the Lord laid on him the sins of us all.

Isaiah 53:5-6 NLT

Isaiah was ministering amongst a people in Exile. They were living in Babylon (modern Iraq) far from home and everything seemed hopeless. They longed to be allowed to return to Jerusalem but as the years passed that seemed increasingly unlikely. In this bleak situation Isaiah boldly proclaims that God has not forgotten them and that he will send a servant who will bring them salvation. As we read these words we see them as a staggeringly powerful prophecy about Jesus, the Messiah.

As we walk towards Easter we need to do so with a renewed amazement at God's willingness to send his own



son into the world. No other person could have done what Jesus did. He alone could take upon himself the sins of the world. Only because he was the perfect Son of God could he bear the full weight of the brokenness and rebellion of humankind and bring salvation.

The miracle of Easter is that it is through the appalling suffering and death of Jesus that we are made whole. God never wanted humankind's life to be spoilt by sin, but that was our choice. God's intention was always that we should enjoy our lives to the full and live in close partnership with him. But sin entered the world and spoilt God's loving plans.

Whatever sin touches it damages and disfigures and only by facing up to the full, awful reality of sin could we ever be set free. That is precisely what Jesus did when he died on the cross. He took the full weight of your sin and mine and opened up a new way into the presence of God. As we prepare for Easter let's do so with a new sense of amazement, gratitude and worship.

March 10, 2021

QUESTION

How do you respond to the fact that Jesus was willing to be killed to make you whole?

PRAYER

Loving Father, thank you that you sent Jesus into the world and that he was willing to die the most terrible death out of love for me. Amen.

