



## *Bishop's Post*

*June July 2020*

Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.” Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, “If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.”

When I wrote the previous Bishop’s Post on 10 March the Corona Virus was spreading, but it was still at a distance. As I write this one, on 10 May, we already have been under lockdown for 53 days. So much has changed in this short period. This gives a totally new meaning to the passage from James.

I used to see it as a warning that death can come unexpectedly. But now we experience the truth of this passage from a completely different angle. Plans have been cancelled - today or tomorrow we cannot go to this or that city, cannot carry on business and make money - not because we have died, but because of a crisis unlike anything that modern world has experienced before. Not even wars have caused such a global shut down.

Three months ago the word “lockdown” did not really mean anything to most people. Zoom conference was only for specialists. 8 weeks without services in any church building in our predominantly Christian country seemed impossible. But now we have “attended” virtual services, celebrated communion at home without a pastor, and are getting used to Zoom meetings and Zoom visits.

This word from James suddenly rings so true, so real, it is almost unbelievable. It is vital that we do not stop at the statement that we are like mist that just vanishes. James’s advice has another part: “Instead, you ought to say: ‘If it is the Lord’s will’...”

James has a very clear message to us: We are not victims of fate, of good or bad luck, not even of a COVID 19 pandemic. We are in the Lord’s hands! Let us emphasise: WE WILL LIVE ... and do this or that. I have no idea exactly how “this or that” is going to look. I assume that many things will change for ever, and that the new normality will be very different from the old one. But in all this I can say: “If it is the Lord’s will ...”. I can receive my life out of his hands, and put my planning, my dreams and also my fears and anxieties into his hands. He, who achieved the biggest victory on the cross, will help us to cope with our crossed out plans. This gives me hope.

## **News from the church**

The Corona Crisis has totally disrupted church life and turned it upside down. Thank you to all pastors, leaders, helpers that faced the challenge of doing church in a very different way. It is wonderful to see the creativity and eagerness to live fellowship and faith in these times!

Although our brass festival had to be cancelled, we could celebrate a virtual brass service - and you can still join in should you have missed it!

The Solidarity Run turned out to be a wonderful event of solidarity, fellowship and humour - despite the isolation in which the more than 50 "athletes" participated. We are extremely grateful for the pledges exceeding R500 000 that were received. Thank you to all who worked hard to make this event happen!

I also want to thank all who are continuing to contribute financially to your congregation and the collection plan. Some even increased their contributions to compensate for those who battle to keep up. Thank you!

A special thank you goes to all the efforts done to assist those in need because of the crisis. Despite government grants, there are many people without any income. More and more churches are joining hands with other faith communities to identify people that are totally without means, and help caring for them. May the Lord bless these efforts abundantly.

Yours in Christ

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Horst Müller". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.