

Jesus with us • Minister's Letter, July 2020

Like me, I expect you have mostly been 'confined to quarters' for quite a long time now. Although for most of us this is due to the coronavirus pandemic, for some it is their normal state, house-bound, even bed-bound. Most of the church's celebrations are to do with events, like the Annunciation, the Nativity of our Saviour, the Crucifixion ... However, occasionally, we celebrate not an event but an idea. This is the case with the Holy Trinity. Another 'idea feast', which is less prominent, celebrates the passionate and compassionate love of Jesus, and goes under such titles as the Sacred Heart, or the Divine Compassion of Christ. Its designated feast day is the second Friday after Trinity Sunday. Here is a feast for 'lockdown'! It is not about an event but about the very nature of Jesus – Jesus who is with us where we are now. Jesus' love for us is not a rose-tinted love, but a committed and compassionate love. The pictorial representation of the feast is usually of a heart surrounded by thorns. This reminds us of the suffering and painful love of our Saviour. There are stories every day at the moment about compassionate care, and people risking their own lives to care for those suffering from Covid-19. They risk their lives because these people cannot care any longer for themselves – they have got to the point where they need the help of others. We are all like this before Jesus. We cannot overcome our faults and failures on our own – we need to call on his love, forgiveness and mercy. Because his love is not 'fair weather' love, but love for stormy and turbulent times too, we know he will not turn away from us, but will reach out to embrace us. Even in our isolation he is with us. Let us rejoice and rest in his compassionate heart.

Short, spoken, services of about ten minutes are still being put on our church website, week by week: www.coalpitheath.org.uk. I hope you are able to listen to them.

Colin Lunt