

Thought for the Month

May 2021

**'In front the sun climbs slow, how slowly
But westward look, the land is bright'
(Arthur Hugh Clough 1819-1861)**

We are beginning to see signs that we may be coming out of darkness as we battle with the impact and unknowns of the COVID-19 pandemic. At last it seems that we can, with optimism, look forward to more freedom to gather together with family and friends and to return to normal life.

We still have fears as we deal with ongoing uncertainty, but we also have hope. St Paul in his letters to the early Christians in Corinth tried to guide and encourage them, and hope underpinned his messages. Hope gives us the strength to keep going in times of fear and uncertainty. It encourages and enables us to look forward to the time when hopes will be realised. Hope is active, not passive, as it shapes our decisions and our actions. Hope encourages and can help us find renewed strength and purpose as we deal with fears and doubt.

Hope does not stand alone as a personal wish or dream. Faith underpins and sets a framework for hope, which can then be realised through generous and selfless, life-enabling love. As we look forward to coming out of the darkness of the pandemic in this country, we need to look afresh at ourselves, our community and beyond. When our hopes of freedom of movement and interaction are realised, we can look for ways to reach out beyond ourselves, community and country. I pray that as we do so we do not forget the many people in this country and around the world who cannot find hope. We can reach out, lovingly, prayerfully and practically to give others hope.

Let us hold on to this message from Paul 'strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way' (1Corinthians 12.31b).

Gwyneth