

If we stay with the earlier ending of Mark's gospel we find ourselves in very familiar territory, in front of an empty tomb not knowing quite what is going to happen next. This is our new normal: unable, now, to meet our Lord in the eucharist, or, indeed, directly, in one another, with only a vague hope that all will be well again in Galilee, on the far side of this epidemic. This is a moment of metanoia, a chance for a change which is necessarily confusing. The period of emptiness, of a sense of loss, of grief for a past which is no longer possible, is then, also, an invitation to deepen our trust in God. We are right in the midst of a radical change in the way society operates; a revolution of sorts which is human-made but not under our control, symptomatic perhaps of the forces humankind has unleashed in many places which are also not ultimately under our control. This sense of loss is symbolised for me at the moment, not only in the lack of contact with so many people and the inability to share the body and blood of Christ, but in the alarmingly empty skies we've been experiencing lately; empty, not only of aircraft, which may be a good thing, but the regular to-ing and fro-ing of the starlings from the fields which until now has always been, for me, one of the marks of Spring. Something odd is going on which is a sign of a much deeper malaise and there is, as yet, no Galilee to go to, that is, no general will to embrace the total change now called for. If Christians have anything to offer it's the fact of metanoia as a principle of our faith from the very beginning, starting with the displaced women at the tomb.

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