



BISHOP RICHARD'S

Weekly Reflection

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

We are about to enter a new phase of our response to the Covid-19 pandemic. There is much apprehension and perhaps, even, fear as many of the restrictions with which we have lived for over a year are lifted at a moment when rates of infection are rising, not least amongst the younger members of the community. It is certainly the case that we are all taking new steps on the journey.

Life is a journey, a pilgrimage. It is the Lord Himself who calls us to walk in his ways. He calls us ever onward, to Himself. The Lord calls in gentle ways, each and every day. Even though there may be times when we try and choose our own way, abandoning Him in the process, the Lord never abandons us. Even if we follow our own path for a long time, He is always close, gently calling us to Himself.

In the First Reading this Sunday, from the prophet Jeremiah, God calls the people back, from wherever they have gone, that they may know His love and care. Fear and terror will be no more, for the people will be secure in the God who cares for them.

In Jesus' time, sheep without a shepherd were at risk of attack from wolves. Perhaps unknowingly, the people who chased after Jesus and His disciples were seeking safety and the security of His word, His leadership.

So it is with us: the Lord calls us to be His, to know that we are loved by Him, safe in His presence. Even though the path ahead may be unclear, despite the worries and concerns we may be carrying, it is possible for us to find calm and

security. As the Psalmist expresses it: "If I should walk in the valley of darkness, no evil would I fear." It is the Lord who calls us, the Lord who accompanies us, the Lord who shepherds us.

With every Blessing,

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