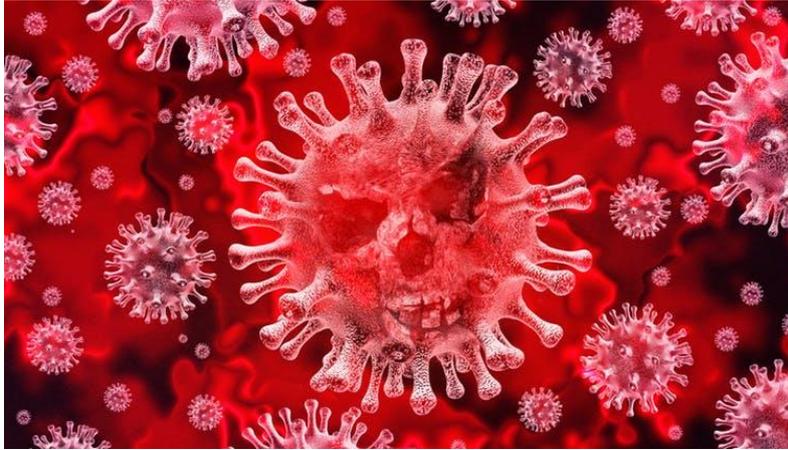


LOVE IN THE TIME OF CORONAVIRUS

REFLECTIONS AND RESOURCES SO FAR, A SELECTION



DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION AT 6 APRIL 2020

This Paper

This paper contains links to about 40 pieces of material – blogposts, columns, articles, songs, poems, images. All were first published during March 2020, or else very early in April.

In its present form the paper is for discussion and consultation, with a view to it being expanded and updated later in the year. If you would like to send comments and suggestions for further or different references and mentions, please drop a line to Robin Richardson at robin@insted.co.uk

The links are grouped under eight headings. The links that appear under the first of these, **Starting points and must-reads**, also appear elsewhere in the paper and together form an introduction to the paper as a whole.

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Please Note: Some of the links in the main body of this paper may not work on your computer. If this happens, you will need to find the item in question through a search engine.

1. STARTERS AND MUST-READS

[AND THE PEOPLE STAYED HOME](#), by Kitty O'Meara: brief poetic statement of longing for a kinder, more generous, more creative, more contemplative world.

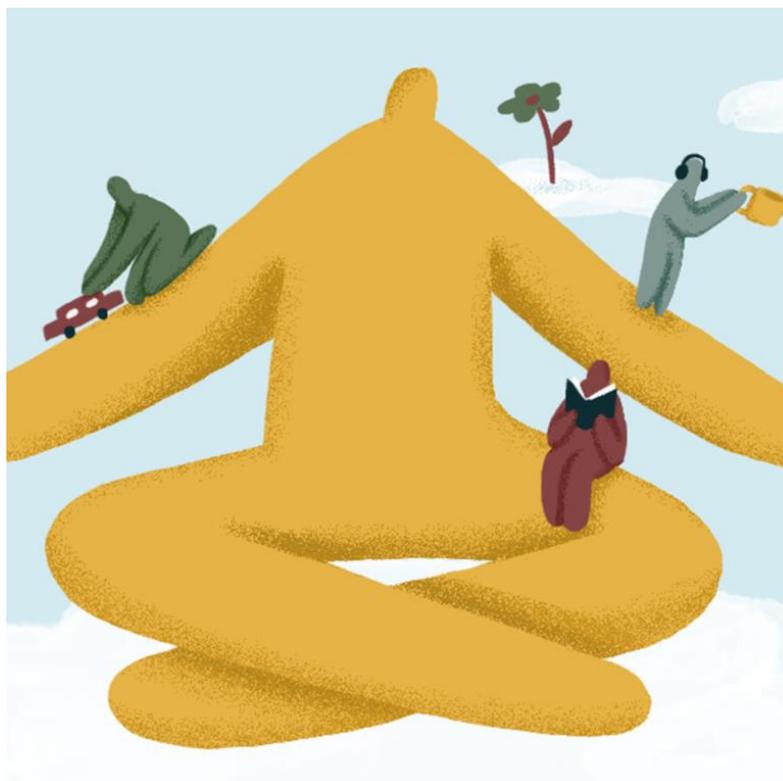
[I AM DEEPLY SCARED FOR SO MANY CHILDREN](#), by an anonymous headteacher: diary of a working week in March 2020 – miseries, anxieties, tragedies, tears, exhaustion, but also 'relentless optimism'.

[HOW ARE YOU FEELING?](#) by Sally Burns: blogpost for the Values and Visions Foundation, whose declared mission is 'enabling young people to find meaning and purpose in a volatile world'.

[THE CHALLENGE OF WORLD LOYALTY](#), by Bruce Epperly: an overview of Christian concepts of divinity, healing and love, and the call to challenge injustice, xenophobia and idolatry.

[LISTENING CARE PACKAGE FOR UNCERTAIN TIMES](#): anthology of podcasts and poetry compiled and curated by Krista Tippett with contributions from (amongst many others) Pádraig Ó Tuama, Rebecca Solnit and Joy Harjo. Introducing this compilation in March 2020 Krista Tippett quotes from Rebecca Solnit: 'When all the ordinary divides and patterns are shattered, people step up to become their brothers' keepers. And that purposefulness and connectedness bring joy even amidst death, chaos, fear and loss.'

'In this moment of global crisis,' she adds, 'we're returning to the conversations we're longing to hear again and finding useful right now. A singular writer and thinker, Solnit celebrates the unpredictable and incalculable events that so often redeem our lives, both solitary and public. She searches for the hidden, transformative histories inside and after events we chronicle as disasters ...'



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2. POETRY AND SONG

Poetry

[IN A TIME OF DISTANCE](#) by Alexander McCall Smith: 'We look for a few bars of song/ That we used to sing together/ A long time ago'.

[PANDEMIC](#), by Lynn Ungar: 'What if you thought of it/ as the Jews consider the Sabbath/— the most sacred of times?/ ... Promise this world your love/ – for better or for worse,/ in sickness and in health,/ so long as we all shall live.'

[LOCKDOWN](#), by Simon Armitage and introduced by Alison Flood: moving from the bubonic plague in Eyam, Derbyshire, in the 17th century to the epic poem Meghadūta by the Sanskrit poet Kālidāsa written around 450 AD, and to Covid-19 in March 2020. Poetry 'can be consoling in times of crisis because it asks us just to focus, and think, and be contemplative'.

[TAE A VIRUS](#), by Willie Sinclair: humorous pastiche of a famous poem by Robert Burns in Scots dialect, published on the website of Grandma Williams.

[AND THE PEOPLE STAYED HOME](#), by Kitty O'Meara: brief poetic statement of longing for a kinder, more generous, more creative, more contemplative world.

[LOCKDOWN](#), by Richard Hendrick: 'Sing as an act of resistance/ Sing though your heart is overthrown/ When you sing there is no distance/ So let your love be known, oh let your love be known/ Though your heart is overthrown./ Let your love be known.

Song

[THE DEER'S CRY](#), setting by Alana Levandoski of famous words by Saint Patrick expressing Christian hope and trust in troubled times, first performed and published in this form on 17 March 2020.

[CORONAVIRUS RHAPSODY](#), by Dana Jay Bein: feisty, defiant, wry, high-spirited gallows-humour, with fresh topical words for Freddie Mercury's famous original.

[CORONAVIRUS REMIX](#), by Phil Wright, choreographer, 'bringing together kids and their families to encourage positivity, love and understanding within families around the world', with Korean sub-titles.

[NESSUN DORMA](#), music by Puccini sung by Maurizio Marchini with introduction by Kyle Macdonald: home-movie rendering of the 1990 World Cup expectation of Italian triumph, sung now from a balcony in Florence during the coronavirus outbreak, March 2020.

[LET YOUR LOVE BE KNOWN](#), by Bono: response to the singing and serenading from balconies in Italy, mentioned above - 'Sing as an act of resistance/ Sing though your heart is overthrown/ When you sing there is no distance/ So let your love be known,/ oh let your love be known.'

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3. MEDITATION AND MIND



[HOW ARE YOU FEELING?](#) by Sally Burns: 'What do young people need now? What do we all need now? Inner strength, a sense of meaning and purpose. We need to remind ourselves what is important to us; we need to get back in touch with our values. We need to take time to reflect: to use stillness, to listen, to share stories, to celebrate what we do have and to grieve for what we have lost, to vision and to keep a journal.'

[PRAYING IN CRISIS](#), by Brian McLaren: three short extracts from his book *Naked Spirituality* (2011) selected by Richard Rohr for contemplation on 25 March 2020, concerned with hurt, anxiety and disappointment.

[SIMPLE OPENING TO GOD'S PRESENCE](#) by Julian Maddock: guided meditation on exploring and encountering 'God'.

[FINDING STEADINESS IN UNCERTAIN TIMES](#), led by Chris Cullen: weekly online sessions from the Oxford Mindfulness Centre, including guided mindfulness practices, teacher talk, and discussions and questions around the weekly topic.

[LENT REFLECTIONS 2020](#), by Laurence Freeman: daily readings to help those following them make a better Lent, leading perhaps to the moment when 'an invisible ray of light touches and restores our shrivelled soul to life and hope. Not that all our wishes are fulfilled, in fact none of them may be, and the pain or loss may still be only too present. But a joy emerges that opens a pathway to the source of being, our being ...'

[FINDING PEACE IN A PANDEMIC](#), by Deepak Chopra: interview about the Hope Goes Global movement 'I see ... selfless service in the face of a mounting threat. What happens next month or even next week is unknown, but the impulse to serve gives hopeful evidence that humanity will not only be saved but deserves to be saved.'

[SPIRITUAL PRACTICES FOR THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC](#), by Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat: to disarm fear and uncertainty, to use while taking preventative measures, to handle social distancing and quarantine, to be present with illness, and to sustain hope. 'These practices are not intended to sugarcoat or minimise the very real dangers of this global health emergency. But they can help us deal with the associated stress, accept what we cannot change, and build up our resilience.'

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4. FAITH AND PRACTICE



[THE CHALLENGE OF WORLD LOYALTY](#), by Bruce Epperly: overview of Christian concepts of divinity, healing and love, and the call to challenge injustice, xenophobia and idolatry.

[THE SILENCES OF GOD](#), by Hugh Dickinson: comment piece in a parish magazine about the current coronavirus outbreak, placing it in the context of world history and Christian theology, and in the personal devotions, doubts and awareness of individual churchgoers.

[COVID DIARY – A PRAYER](#), by Christopher Page: blogpost containing a list of intentions and concerns relating to coronavirus globally, nationally and locally. 'Prayer may not alter the reality of our circumstances. But it will alter our inner response to the awkwardness and tragedy of this time. The COVID prayer here tries to capture some of the hopes and aspirations we might hold in this troubled time.'

[TOOLKIT FOR UK MUSLIM COMMUNITIES DURING THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK](#), by the Muslim Council of Britain: wide-ranging review of theological, administrative and practical matters for individuals, mosques, Islamic centres and local communities.

[SCIENCE VERSUS THE RELIGIOUSLY BLINKERED](#), by Inayat Bunglawala: polemical brief blogpost about the need for religious leaders (including imams, muftis, priests, rabbis) to have due respect for scientific research and knowledge.

[THE CORONAVIRUS IS TRANSFORMING JUDAISM](#) by Jeffrey Salkin: 'The paradox of the destruction of the Temple is that Judaism survived and thrived. Could the paradox of the pandemic be that Judaism is now surviving and thriving – in ways that we could have only dimly imagined, as little as three weeks ago?

[FUAD NAHDI OBITUARY](#), tribute by Jack O'Sullivan and Abdul-Rehman Malik to a great human being, founder of – amongst many other initiatives – Radical Middle Way, whose strapline is Fight Fear. Fight Ignorance. Have Faith.

[THE DEER'S CRY](#), setting by Alana Levandoski of famous words by Saint Patrick expressing Christian hope and trust in troubled times, first performed and published in this form on 17 March 2020.

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5. HOME AND HOUSEHOLD



[DEAR PARENTS](#), by an anonymous author: short letter purporting to be written by a headteacher or school principal about helping, supporting and coping with children and young people at home during the pandemic.

[VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE](#), by Melissa Godin: evidence throughout the world of increased levels of violence and abuse against women and girls. 'Domestic violence is rooted in power and control. Right now, we are all feeling a lack of control over our lives and an individual who cannot manage that will take it out on their victim.'

[I AM DEEPLY SCARED FOR SO MANY CHILDREN](#), by an anonymous headteacher: diary of a working week in March 2020 – miseries, anxieties, tragedies, tears, exhaustion, and also 'relentless optimism'.

[VALUES AND VISIONS](#), by Sally Burns and Georgeanne Lamont: four sets of downloadable resources and activities free of charge, respectively entitled Valuing your self; Journalling is fun and can help; The Earth – valuing our home; and Community, suitable for children and young people who have to stay in their homes during the pandemic.

[CREATIVE PLAY](#), by Save the Children: a wealth of ways to keep kids entertained during lockdown, including reading a book, getting creative, making pom-poms, sending messages of solidarity, and building epic dens.

[SEVEN WAYS TO PROTECT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH](#), by Jo Steer: practical and down-to-earth advice for teachers, as also for parents of children and teenagers at the current troubled and troubling time, that is relevant for everyone. 'Naturally, we're eager to get the latest news on this changing situation, day by day. Just remember that continuously scrolling through news and my social media feed is the fastest way to feeling awful. Boundaries, remember?'

[TALKING TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT CORONAVIRUS](#), by Parents Helpline: ten simple but sensible and sensitive pieces of advice and wisdom.

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6. THEATRE, FILM AND ART



[FIVE TV SITCOMS TO HELP YOU GET THROUGH LOCKDOWN](#), by Alec Charles: 'It's a truth frequently acknowledged that laughter is the best medicine (at least when paracetamol isn't available) ... Art may disturb and challenge us – but it can also console and inspire us in our darkest hours.'

[EIGHT OSCAR-WINNING FILMS TO WATCH IN ISOLATION](#), by Paul Gambaccini: 'Under current circumstances ... many of us will be treating every day like a wet weekend by sticking indoors ... What better time is there to while away an afternoon with a classic film?'

[FIVE HIDDEN GEMS](#), by Will Gompertz: 'It's low tech (hand puppets), low concept (a male dog and female cat share a house next door to a frog) and utterly brilliant. It doesn't matter what age you are, Hector's House is a guaranteed five-minute hit of faultless, charming entertainment.'

[THEATRES STREAMING PRODUCTIONS TO WATCH AT HOME FOR FREE](#): including National, Sadler's Wells, Royal Court and Hampstead.

[ALMEIDA THEATRE](#): In recent years the Almeida Theatre has pioneered the production of short films, speeches and video-monologues. In early April 2020 it announced that it had rounded-up some of its favourite clips from recent productions, exclusive backstage photos, and its epic retelling of *The Iliad*.

[CULTURE IN QUARANTINE](#): is described by the BBC as a virtual festival of the arts featuring theatre, dance, visual art and classical music taking place across online, TV and radio. It is rooted in the experience of both voluntary and involuntary lockdown and isolation.

[ARMCHAIR GALLERY](#): 'Discover, play and create with your favourite artists, artworks and artefacts from the collections of Chatsworth House, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, The Lowry, Dulwich Picture Gallery, Pitt Rivers Museum, Mr Straw's House and Newstead Abbey.'

[THE SOURCE OF ART IS LOVE](#), by David Hockney, interviewed by Will Gompertz: 'We have lost touch with nature, rather foolishly as we are a part of it, not outside it. This will in time be over and then what? What have we learned? I am 83 years old, I will die. The cause of death is birth. The only real things in life are food and love in that order, just like our little dog Ruby. I really believe this and the source of art is love. I love life.'

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7. POLITICS AND FUTURES



[WHAT WILL THE WORLD BE LIKE AFTER CORONAVIRUS?](#) by Simon Mair: discussion of four possible futures – 1) descent into barbarism 2) robust state capitalism 3) radical state socialism 4) transformation into a big society built on mutual aid.

[WE ARE RACING TO THE EDGE OF DISASTER](#), by Noam Chomsky: extremely pessimistic view of what is likely to happen next, within and between countries. Coronavirus is 'bad enough' but there are much further dangers, namely nuclear war and climate change.

[BEWARE THE LIES OF MARCH](#), by Matt Carr: withering attack on the suggestion that 'the coronavirus may generate new forms of transnational cooperation and solidarity, a new conception of the enabling state, new forms of economic and social organisation, all of which will leave us better-placed to deal with the impact of climate change, and repair and reverse some of the damage to the social fabric inflicted by decades of free market triumphalism and austerity'.

[DURING THE PANDEMIC- FORGIVE OUR DEBTS](#) by Michael Hudson: article first published in *The Washington Post* outlining a Jewish perspective on economic justice.

[POST-VIRUS SOCIETY](#), by Brian Eno and Yanis Varoufakis: interview and conversation on 3 April 2020 about 'our current predicament ... [and] ... our duty to fight not for a return to "normality" but for something much, much better than what was "normal" until a few weeks ago'. Seeking 'escape and hope at this time of confinement and frustration', Eno and Varoufakis discuss and debate the recent 'upsurge of solidarity' in the UK after years of being at each other's throats regarding Brexit, and 'we are learning we can be nice to each other'.

[IT IS VITAL WE PUT THIS CRISIS TO GOOD USE](#), by David Hunter: 'Perhaps the covid-19 pandemic will herald a new age and result in changes to our politics and values which have hitherto proved so stubborn and resistant to change. It will fall to the young to seize the initiative and ensure that the lessons that are all too clearly there to be learned are acted upon. We have lost a decade in tackling social injustice and can ill afford to lose another.'

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§ BLOGS AND BULLETINS

[Alana Levandoski](#) — ‘music for spiritual seekers rooted in the Christian tradition’

[Beyond the Fields We Know](#) — ‘wanderings in wild places and stray thoughts’

[Center for Action and Contemplation](#) — ‘turning information into transformation’

[Cynthia Bourgeault](#) — centering prayer, wisdom paths, Mary Magdalene

[Democracy in Europe Movement 25](#) — ‘democratise or disintegrate’

[Echoes of Panhala](#) — ‘to share poems and prose that make the day a bit brighter’

[In a Spacious Place](#) — ‘reflections on the journey into Christ’

[Infernal Machine](#) — ‘notes from the margins’

[Omega Center](#) — exploring love at the heart of the universe

[Rambling Rector \(Retired\)](#) — ‘a retired rector rambles, an explorer explores’

[Shift Network](#) — inspired hearts, awakened minds, and dedicated souls’

[Spiritual Journeys](#) — ‘explore, look, do, ask, dream’

[Spirituality and Practice](#) — ‘listen to your life’

[The Imagination Acts](#) — how individuals can effect change

[Theos](#) — ‘understanding faith, enriching society’

[Tikkun](#) — Jewish, interfaith and secular voices on healing and transformation

[This Body](#) — ‘the sensation of life’

[Values and Visions](#) — ‘to find meaning and purpose in a volatile world’

[World Council for Christian Meditation](#) — ‘contemplative paths through the crisis’

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