

At Home Quiet Day
(or an hour or two maybe!)

by Revd Alison Tomlin

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The picture I offer is of the centre table at a retreat I led some time ago. I invite you to use it if it helps you, or you might like to create something for yourself with whatever materials you have at home – or in the garden! This one is an attempt to open up options for imaginative reflection on our journey with God. Feel free to ignore the cupboard doors behind the table! – or you might be invited to reflect on anything you have shut away ‘in a cupboard’, as it were.

Please use as much or as little of what follows as you like, using the time and space in whatever way is helpful to you; whatever helps you feel closer to the God who is a constant companion. Always remember to stop at any point; to rest and breathe; because this is offered as a gift, not yet another burden or rule.



On the left of the picture is bright colour; a candle; and an image, which for me has always symbolised God holding you in the palm of God's hand, in order to love and cherish you. So here, in the midst of "lock-down", isolation, pain or sorrow, and whatever concerns or anxieties you may carry, you might like to start by remembering how much God loves you. Isaiah 43 verses 1 to 7, and particularly the first half of verse 4, may help:

Because you are precious in my sight and honoured and I love you, says God.

And then, in complete confidence, hear the invitation of Jesus to journey with him: *Come and see!*

In the Centre of the picture, by the wooden cross, is an image of one way of travelling with God. How does that make you feel? What does it make you think of?

I find the idea of a piggy-back ride a joyful image of being carried. It is fun; it is possible to see what God sees; there is a sense of an intimacy with God, that allows us to be ourselves with freedom and laughter; there is the idea of us hugging God as well as God holding us. Some of us may be so much in need of the possibility of hugs at the moment, and longing to be able to hold family and friends. So maybe we need to remember that the arms of God hold us whether we feel them or not.

If none of those thoughts are helpful to you, simply ignore them and stay with what comes to you.

On the right is a pathway and a representation of a river. The path is lit to remind us that all our journey is accompanied by the Light of the world, but it is stony and possibly difficult, and certainly not straight forward. If we imagine ourselves walking this path to the mountain, we would not be able to see the way ahead, and each part of it might be a scramble; a struggle; a climb; or even mean going back to find another way round an obstacle.

But there are also places where we could stop and rest. How does that work in these times? What refreshment do we feel we need? What is available? And during this 'lockdown' living, how does it feel to journey on without knowing what the end will be?

The first river crossing is a bridge, which might feel quite safe, but the second is stepping stones, which often don't feel safe at all. And at the end of it there is a mountain – is it for us to climb? Or to provide a safe space to be at peace? There are small caves, after all, where we might be able to sleep and be at home with God. And one day meet our companions again, climbing or resting.

The journey continues. Our current situation is simply another stage on the way.

On the horrible days, we need to accept how lousy it feels; live with our need to weep, or sleep; acknowledge our fears and anxieties, and hold on to the knowledge that even in this darkness, God is with us.

And on the better days, we are invited to discover again our own ability to give thanks for all that is good, and in doing so, to receive the joy that is offered as God walks with us through it all.