

I'm going to start by telling you a story about a vicar in training. Who asks her bishop if it's ok for her to eat McDonalds while she prays. The bishop replies, 'Of course not – it would be sacrilege – you need to get your priorities right about what is important and essential in your life!'

We'll come back to this poor, hungry vicar later.....

Let's think about what is essential and important to us.

Last year at Pentecost I spoke on a Zoom recording from home and I spoke about how I love going on rollercoasters and how the disciples were about to get on this rollercoaster of Christianity – they didn't know where it would take them or how it would make them feel, but they had Jesus guiding them through the Holy Spirit and it made them realise things were going to get exciting. I love that idea of Pentecost being like a rollercoaster – I love it so much in fact that I asked Mother Juliet to put some Amari and Shae's pictures from last year into this year's service booklet - just in case you missed them...

Looking back, it seems a bit cruel of me to have done a talk last year about rollercoasters when the very idea of going to a theme park or a fair was still something on the very distant horizon. Rollercoaster rides were definitely on the list of things that were 'non-essential'.

Talking about essentials, I wonder, did anyone else find the list of shops and services that were considered essential quite interesting? Not that I'm complaining - I have to admit to maybe adding a few things that might not be considered exactly **essential** to our weekly shop – I promise you – the garden chairs seemed essential at the time!

And depending on who you are and your priorities, I wonder which of these shops you would consider essential. Here's a list of shops and services from around the world that we're seen as essential in those particular countries:

In France, during lockdown the shops that were 'essential' included cheese shops, bakers and chocolate shops, and many states in America decided that gun shops were essential businesses that should stay open during the pandemic –and(I'm quoting from the BBC here) apparently in those states, sales of guns had 'surged to record levels'. Whereas in *Australia* many toy

shops stayed open, with the prime minister defending this decision explaining that he'd had to buy a lot of jigsaws to get his family through lockdown.

So what about you?

Are there any things that you or your family thought were essential in lockdown that other people might not have considered essential?

I asked some people about some of the least essential 'essential' things they'd bought recently see if any of these were your 'essentials' too.....

A paddling pool

Plants they stopped me from going crazy – and books

Seeds to grow plants. They gave us a sense of hopefulness – of looking forward to the future

Plants plants plants - so many that the house is full and the kids tell me I have an addiction

Need you ask lol..... lego for my mental well-being and for the osteoarthritis in my hands xx

A yoga / exercise mat...Totally and utterly essential to my whole wellbeing (it turns out) and has given me a whole new lease of life and a new direction!!! (PT exam on Tuesday) –[I wonder who this could have been.....]

A wordsearch book ad walking shoes

A facebook portal for mum

Plants

Wine

Garden furniture (it wasn't just me then)

Flour

I guess one way to think of essential things is that they are the things that we normally take for granted – but if they weren't there we'd really notice we hadn't got them.

So let's think about the disciples at Pentecost.

On that first Pentecost, the disciples might have been feeling a bit like that – that something essential had gone missing – their Jesus - their leader and friend had left them. Of course, He had prepared them for this moment, but they, like us, were only human, and this person, who had been such a massive part of their lives was not there any more. Something essential was missing.

And then this happened

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. ² Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues^{as} as the Spirit enabled them.

So, the disciples have their proof now – I don't know how you choose to interpret this part of the Gospel, but this is a pretty awesome moment – the disciples have been promised proof that Jesus will still be with them, and here is Jesus, through the Holy Spirit – an essential part of being a Christian....

And so many years later, we read this story of the first Pentecost and hopefully it reminds us, it certainly reminds me, that we have the Holy Spirit here with us – always guiding supporting surrounding us and holding us up.

In fact, I was listening to someone talk about this very subject a while ago and I was inspired by it. So I thought I'd share it with you –

https://www.saintswithuns.org.uk/Media/AllMedia.aspx?show_media=249467&show_file=266104

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We have the gift of the Holy Spirit, and throughout this pandemic time we've seen people using their gifts to help and support and love others. We heard Richard and Juliet there using their new-found gift of being recording stars to bring God's message to people in lockdown and as we feel the after-effects of the pandemic we can all use our spiritual gifts in everyday ways through faith and love.

Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, is an essential part of our everyday. Always there even though we might not realise it. Sometimes we just have to shift the way we look at things to realise where our priorities lie and what the essential things are or what the essential things should be.

Let's think about that – let's think about shifting the way we look at things to realise what the essential things should be to us.....

And now, let's go back to the vicar in training who I introduced you to at the beginning of this talk – if you remember, she'd gone and asked her bishop if she could eat McDonalds while she prayed – her boss, the Bishop was not impressed.

So, later on that day, after shifting her thinking slightly, the trainee vicar went back to the Bishop with another question.

She asked, 'Is it OK if pray while I eat McDonalds?' And the Bishop answered – 'Of course it is OK – praying is essential and important - you can pray whenever you like and wherever you are. God is always with you.'

Jesus through the Holy Spirit is with us always – an essential part of our every day - always there for us, meaning that we are truly blessed.

On this Pentecost Sunday, let us pray for, remember and be so thankful for the Holy Spirit as an essential part of our lives, today and every day.

Amen