



April 2021

Dear Friends,

I've just seen a beautiful rainbow and I'm reminded of the story of Noah's Ark when God flooded the earth to destroy the corruption that filled the world. But when the waters receded God promised never again to judge the earth with a flood giving us the rainbow as the sign of this promise. As the rainbow fades and I pick up my newspaper to read the government roadmap for lifting the lockdown, I wonder what the headline for Noah's flood would be today. Perhaps "God Destroys World in Flood." or "God Gives Humans a Second Chance."

Smiling I reflect on God's rainbow promise, and thinking of the past year I'm reminded that nowhere in the bible does God say, "I will never send a storm again. Nowhere does God promise that life will be free of storms, trials, troubles and difficulties. Most rainbows appear only after the storm has come and gone. God never promises a life free from pain and suffering. As the song says, he 'never promised us a rose garden.' Or if he did, the roses have thorns. That's life - there is sun, laughter and joy but there are also floods, storms, wars, famines and Coronavirus.

Some have been saying this pandemic is a judgment from God. But I dispute that, as do many others. In the flood story three times God says, "Never again!" I believe that God meant never again would he send a worldwide judgment, including the sinful and the innocent. The spread of the virus throughout the world is a result of our modern time, not a judgment from God. We are all connected as never before. That is why it's a pandemic.

Some people say 'God never gives us more than we can bear.' I think it's more a case of 'God will walk through it all with us and at times when it overwhelms us, he will carry us.' The human race can't bear another worldwide flood but there will still be many storms along the way, tears aplenty, and much sadness. We're living through one such storm now. But if we look up, we will see God's rainbows, the sign and token of his love, here and there along the way, reminding us that the storms of life don't mean that things are out of control.

I believe that God uses every situation to encourage us to review our life, our situation and gives us a second chance, a chance to change. What difference will the pandemic and all we've been through make to us as individuals and to the world at large? There have been so many good things amongst the bad. Will we choose to change or go back to it all as it was before.

So what's the sensational media headline to our flood story, the pandemic - "*Pandemic Destroys World*" or "*World has a Second Chance.*" Both are correct but I think I prefer the latter because that's what we all need. And for all who labour under heavy burdens and deep personal sorrows, look up and you will see the rainbow, the sign that God has not forgotten you.

*Rev'd Nicki*