

## **Thought for the Day 23<sup>rd</sup> April from Janet Lindley (All Hallows)**

**Reading: Exodus 12:37-55**

It's 23 April and a whole month since significant restrictions were put in place here in the UK. Many normal aspects of our lives have changed - working from home, schooling from home, queues for the supermarkets, shops closed, and regular updates on the news with little certainty about the future.

The lectionary reading for today in Exodus 12:37-55, we find ourselves taken back to a significant moment in the Old Testament when the whole Israelite people were called to leave Egypt. It is a bit of a strange passage recounting the situation they were in, what God called them to do and what they did.

Reading the passage I wondered what this could possibly say to us right now in our time of coronavirus. I was tempted to pick another reading! But looking back again, what stands out to me is the similarities with what the Israelites faced.

**The departure from Egypt was not a planned move.** They were leaving after living there for 430 years. They were used to a way of life, making a living and had made this place their home. Yet overnight they were called to pack up and go, with urgency and speed. They made food with what they had in their cupboard and there was no chance to let the bread rise before eating.

**Leaving Egypt meant accepting life wouldn't be the same.** They had to leave their normal activities and local connections. They were not only stopping old habits and patterns, but there were new rules to follow too. And these weren't rules just for a few, not just for the people that believed in God. Everyone was called to change their ways and behaviours - everyone in the new travelling community.

**There wasn't a clear picture of what life would be like once they'd left Egypt.** There was no holiday brochure with pictures of what to expect. There was no itinerary of stops along the way. It was uncertain and worrisome, mixed in with trusting in those God had spoken to. Praying that this was the right way.

Does any of this sound familiar to us here and now? Here we are on this unplanned coronavirus journey, with lives radically changed, stepping out into the unknown!

I pray that we would know the presence of God with us. Maybe it won't be through pillars of cloud and fire or food from heaven! But perhaps instead in the small encouragements and the everyday, accompanied by the 'great crowd of witnesses' (Hebrews 12:1) through Zoom, YouTube, FaceTime, Whatsapp, Skype, a phonecall or a letter.