

Thought for the day – Thursday 7th January 2021

Simple kind acts have the power to banish loneliness – Rev John Marshall

When I read this article by Doctor Punam Krisham, I was very moved and I wanted to include it in my sermon for Epiphany.

If Epiphany is a showing of the Glory of God, we can see it too in acts of kindness. As God came as a baby, we can imagine many humble people who came to see Jesus in the manger.

“Sat in my hospital room, having just given birth a few hours earlier, I felt so overwhelmed. With everything in lockdown and no scope for visitors, I felt really vulnerable and alone. As I held on to my newborn with tears running down my face, you tapped on the door. ‘Would you like some toast and tea?’

There was such a warmth in your voice. You noticed I was upset and you came in. You apologised for not coming closer because you wanted to keep me and my baby safe, but offered to stay and talk to me if that would help. You brought me tea and toast, the best tea and toast I ever had, by the way, and you took away my loneliness.

You admired my baby, which is something every new mum wants, and you brought a much-needed smile and a sense of gratitude to what was a very isolating time. I missed my mum and my husband, but you reassured me that every mum on the ward was feeling the same way. Simply knowing that I was not alone meant the world to me.

You are a granny and I loved hearing you talk about your granddaughter who was born a few months earlier. We spoke about how difficult it was for you not being allowed to see your daughter due to lockdown, but how you had turned it all around and channelled all your energies into helping new mums on the maternity ward. I needed to go to the toilet and you helped me in the most kind and gentle way.

In the absence of my own family, in those moments, you made me feel like I mattered. It wasn't about my baby - you took care of me. Thank you. When you left, I felt so much better. You had listened to my anxieties and I felt lighter, less alone and more whole again.

It really is the little things that matter and at a time when vulnerability weakens us, angels like you appear to help channel that same vulnerability into strength. As a doctor, I always maintain that every patient must receive the best care and this involves a multi-team approach.

When I thanked you for taking care of me you laughed and said, 'I've done nothing, I'm just the tea lady!' for me, you were one of the key players in my journey as a patient, and I will forever be grateful to you for helping me come through one of the toughest nights of my life."

(from the 28th December 2020)

I was so grateful to those who showed care and kindness when I was in hospital – and they came in many guises.

Let us continue to pray for all NHS staff and patients.