Quieted hearts,

Like many of us I am spending much more time in front of a computer screen than normal. The outside world is quieter. There is less traffic on the road and it should come as no surprise then that the animal kingdom is starting to take notice. In Llandudno in Wales there has been an influx of mountain goats roaming the deserted streets for an easy snack. Of course, I read about this on my computer screen.

I think I have even noticed here in Brisbane, although I could be imagining it, more birdsong recently. It is almost as if the rowdy teenagers at the party are slumped quietly in the corner and the shyer guests are coming out to chat.

As we enter more deeply into a time of reduced face-to-face social contact and necessary hibernation within our households, we might see more of this. Not only the wonderfully creative activities in people's homes (the internet is rife with these at the moment), but we might start to see more of nature around us, coming back from where we pushed it out.

As we start to explore new habits, home-based habits, I wonder if we might at times be so quieted that we hear more clearly the still small voice of calm, the sound of sheer silence. This is a somewhat clumsy way of saying that in our newly enforced patterns of behaviour, we might be aware that God is still active and present, and might even be more noticeable, as we have lessened our frenzy.
The Rev'd Canon Mark Oakley, Dean of St John's College at the University of Cambridge, was expected to visit Brisbane this month and present a seminar at St Francis College. He is currently in 'lockdown' in the UK and recently wrote this in *The Church Times*: “The silence at home feels like God's last resort against all my nonsense.”

Perhaps we should do our best to welcome the silence and relish the difficulty in trying to make sense of things. Maybe even in these oddest of times and strangest of circumstances the God, who was at work in a tomb, might be at work in our lives, too.

**Be still, my soul: the Lord is on thy side**

*By Katharina Amalia Dorothea von Schlegel*

Be still, my soul: the Lord is on thy side;  
Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain;  
Leave to thy God to order and provide;  
In every change He faithful will remain.  
Be still, my soul: thy best, thy heavenly Friend  
Through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

**Sunday Devotions • Monday 20 April 2020 • By The Rev’d Kate Ross**

**Sunday Devotion: 26 April 2020, The Feast of St Mark, evangelist and martyr**

**Main Readings:** Isaiah 62.6-12; Psalm 89.1-9; Ephesians 4.7-16 or 1 Peter 5.5b.14; Mark 16.1-15 or 16.16-20

**Supplementary Readings:** Psalm 19; Isaiah 50.4-11; Acts 12.25-13.13; Psalm 45; Ezekiel 1.4-15; 2 Timothy 4.1-11

‘They shall be called, “The Holy People, The Redeemed of the Lord”.’ (*Isaiah 62.12*)

I hate getting lost. I get very anxious about not being able to locate myself in space. I wander around until, with great relief, I find something familiar. Up to then I am dealing with rising fear. I feel as if I have lost control of my life and am under threat – being lost challenges me physically and spiritually that much.

I should not worry, however. The physical and spiritual moments I face are taken on board by the Lord who guides the Lord's people and promises them new life. The people of God often lose their way, but Isaiah reassures them that they have a new name now – ‘The Holy People, The Redeemed of the Lord’. They are holy in God's eyes; they are saved by the Lord.

Jerusalem also has a new name – ‘Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken’ (*Isaiah 62.12*). Just as I cannot stand not knowing where I am, God cannot stand being away from his people, the people of Jerusalem. Jerusalem will be saved and have a bright future. We know that in Jesus we all become part of God’s Jerusalem.

Here, Isaiah is a prophet of hope. We will be renamed. By God we will be called into abundance. My life will be new again and I will not fear. I will be found even though I am lost.