

**Faith Comment from Petersfield Quaker Meeting written by Geoff Pilliner,
for publication on APRIL 1st.**

FAITH IN THE SHADOW OF CORONAVIRUS

Coronavirus. Whatever has it got to do with faith? Probably very little. It is a natural phenomenon. It is not punishment on humankind for sins, real or imagined. If it were, the innocent would escape uninfected. And it will not bypass Christians because they are true to their faith. It is equally likely to affect any one of us, whatever our faith, our nationality, our colour. Facing this threat to our lifestyle and our complacency, we are all equally at risk.

Jesus did relate the parable of the ten virgins going to meet a bridegroom. Five had spare oil for their lamps. The other five had to be away looking for more oil to keep their lamps alight and missed the bridegroom when he came. Moral: be prepared.

Jesus also taught that we should love one another, a theme repeated in every religious faith. Times like this are when we can show that our faith means something, when we are ready to share, when we are ready to look after those in need and our neighbours and friends, when we are less concerned about ensuring our own financial stability or food stocks and more concerned about the hardships of others.

Religious faith – any religious faith – is not concerned with a set of beliefs that if acknowledged will bring you advantages, but on how you live your life, how you maintain values of integrity, generosity, and, most of all, caring for others. At a time like this, whatever our religious faith, or none, we need to be concerned for everyone's welfare, not just our own, to look after one another, to recognise that we are, everyone of us, unique but precious, children of God. That is what our faith has to do with Coronavirus.