

Hullo everybody.

According to my diary today was the day I was going to tell you about the successful germination of liquorice seeds in the manse. The idea was to link the germination of the seeds to the parable of the sower and the important work of Christian Aid

Luckily Norma and I are both patient people and god's word is with us for ever because apart from a slight change in seed colour – which may be a good or a bad sign- there is nothing to report yet. Although we did have a bit of panic mid- week when the seeds disappeared and we wondered just when we had accidentally put them in the bin. Suffice it to say that we discovered them nestling behind the closed salad drawer where they must have slipped off the shelf. The mystery is really just how did the small packet get to the back edge of the shelf? As I say a mystery.

But there are always other things happening in life to reflect on and while we don't have germinated liquorice seedlings to show you, we do have some young sunflower plants growing in both garden and utility room including one which is happily growing away on a piece of kitchen paper in a glass. I've been doing this sort of thing on window sills for over 50 years and it's still exciting to see roots grow and shoots develop. And people's eyes still glaze over while I wax lyrical about epigeal germination by the elongation of

the hypocotyl. Strange that, very strange. Why should anyone be so worried about Greek words being used in everyday situations?

Out in the garden, the sunflower are growing too, but much more slowly than those in the utility room due to the cold condition.

It's noticeable that some of those inside have already attained quite a height and lacking any short garden canes in the manse, they are already being supported by an assortment of screw drivers, pencils and pairs of scissors.

It is strange where support is needed in life isn't it? And how often that support is provided in ways we didn't expect.

The start of Christian aid was a bit like that. A new entry into the world of supporting people. It's been going for decades now and each year we are used to seeing those little red envelopes appear in church or through our doors.

This year things are a bit different the work still goes on, but we are urged to donate online. You can see how to do that by following the link on this webpage or from our Christian page in the header of this site.

I wonder if the disciples around Jesus also thought the support he gave them was sometimes given in different ways too. The parable of the sower is about helping people, supporting them like Christian aid and in doing so

supporting God to live his message of the kingdom of God coming near.

We know the story well. It actually seems quite clear cut and easy to work out doesn't it?

The sower goes out to sow some seed falls on the path where the birds eat it up

Some seed falls on the rock and as it grows it withers for lack of water.

Some falls among the thorns and the thorns grow up and choke it

And of course some seeds fall on good soil where it grows to produce fruit a 100 hundred fold.

It does seem pretty straight forward doesn't it? Any difficulty is in making it work. This is about choice. Making the right choice. The aim is to produce plants that fruit hundred fold and there are two ways to do this. You can be very active good seed growing in the good soil and going about distributing help to others in need or be the good soil and spend your time being with those in need supporting them with long term help through difficult times in a whole range of ways.

Both are equally valid ways of helping and that is what Christian Aid has been doing since it started. Supporting

people both financially and with advice in many situations in many countries.

Jesus simply ends his story with

Let anyone with ears to hear listen!

Let's use our ears to listen to Jesus not just while we support Christian Aid this week or while we stay at home to defeat coronavirus but in all that we do. Sometimes we will be like the seed elongating their hypocotyls as they push upwards towards the sky to become fruitful helping out on the world. At other times we will be the soil supporting the seeds as they grow to be the fruitful plants that God is looking for.

Let anyone with ears to hear listen!

Let the seeds of hopefulness blossom and grow in our community and throughout the world.

Let us pray.

Come let our hearts be glad

And our spirits rejoice,

For God shows us the path of life

And leads us in the ways of peace.

May the seeds of hopefulness

Be planted in our hearts today,

And the fruits of hopefulness

Blossom and grow in our community

And throughout the world in the work of Christian aid

And all those individuals and groups

who help and support those

in challenging times and situations

Amen.