

Good morning!

It was a great pleasure for me to see the enthusiasm with which people engaged with the online learning yesterday. All the teachers reported that they had had a great deal of communication with you and I must say that I much enjoyed many email conversations with the Year 8s who were doing PSHE.

I'm sure you saw, or have been told about, the Prime Minister's announcement yesterday that everyone in the country other than key workers need to stay at home, a decision which will be reviewed in three weeks' time. Though I know this is going to be hard, it will make the fight against the Coronavirus more effective and will ultimately lead to it being won rather more rapidly so we have to think of it as a good and responsible thing. Remember what I said then about reading and about finding another skill or hobby to learn. We are also very lucky in having modern technology to hand. We can talk to our friends via the phone, or FaceTime or WhatsApp and we can keep in touch with the outside world through the internet and television. We have access to innumerable films and programmes at the click of a button. Furthermore, you are allowed to go out once a day for some exercise so long as you don't interact with anyone else. Do take advantage of this and get some fresh air into your lungs if you can and stretch your legs. We are entering the most lovely time of year; all around you, life is coming into being. Flowers are forcing their way up through the ground; leaves are beginning to bud, birds are becoming ever more vocal in their song and the world is about to explode into colour.

All these things should give us hope and remind us that all will be well. I have no doubt that we will all find this short passage of life tricky but we should all remember that human beings, particularly in our modern era, have so many clever ways of solving problems and difficulties. Easy tests for the virus are close to being ready and there have been significant breakthroughs in terms of vaccines. Modern communication means that we can get messages to everyone very quickly, messages which will mean that we can coordinate the fight against the virus. So there is very much to be thankful for.

I want to briefly tell you about someone who lived in the City of Norwich in the 14th Century, called Julian. The first remarkable thing about her was that despite being called Julian, she was a woman. The second was that she spent much of her life alone in a little cell attached to a church in the city. The restriction on her movement was so much more than what you will have to deal with over the next few days. It went on for years and years and the place in which she confined herself was tiny without any real decoration. I'm sure you are wondering what she was doing in this cell – indeed why would anyone choose to live in a very confined space for such a long time. The answer was that she was having a conversation with God. She spent all this time thinking about God, praying to God and, famously, she had many visions which she wrote down and which can still be read today.

Following all these journeys of the mind, and as you know, I hope that you are going to make many journeys of the mind over the next few weeks by reading and thinking, Julian wrote a sentence which is one of my favourites and which we should all treasure. It sounds a bit odd because it is written in the English of the time which was very different from ours, but I have no doubt that you will all understand it. She wrote:

“All shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well.”

All, indeed, all shall be well and I look forward to hearing more about your electronic learning over the next few days. Enjoy your journeying and stay well.

Mr Murray