

UPDATE
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2020



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Dear friends

GLORIOUS GOLDFINCHES

On my walks in the country lanes around Tranent I love looking and listening for birds. One of the most stunning small birds is the goldfinch with its vibrant colours. They can be grumpy little creatures, so you might be wondering why their group name is a 'charm' ... see over the page!

The great artists of the Middle Ages often showed the baby Jesus with a goldfinch in his hand - this as symbolic of how he would die and the hope of resurrection to come. People of that time understood nature as serving human needs and one legend told of how the goldfinch saw Jesus carry the cross wearing a crown of thorns. It flew down to try to remove the crown and that was why it has a red head. The birds feed on thorn seeds so we can see how this association would be made.

Even in the Gospel stories of Jesus' birth we see conflict and suffering reflecting his passion and end. We speak of Jesus' death and resurrection and need to hold both together in our life-faith journeys—to die to self that we might have new life



**May we bear suffering
as Jesus did in his life
- dying to self -
and trusting in God's love
to bring resurrection
by his grace.**

Russell



**The goldfinch legend trying to
remove Jesus' crown of thorns.**



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People are doing some great things during this period of isolation

- an accordionist and singer setting up outside windows of Care Home to play for residents
- a church WhatsApp group sharing reminiscences of street games they played as children
- our Wednesday Prayer Group committed to keeping the hour of prayer together from 2.30-3.30pm
- one of our older members given wool and knitting furiously for a new baby
- Bethany Care Shelter moving into The Old Waverley Hotel in Princes Street from now till June providing single room accommodation and extra volunteers needed for the hotel kitchen!

We do whatever we can in action, in support and in prayer to share God's love

Refugees do not have the luxury of social distancing

When this virus hits a war zone, as it did this week in Syria, it reaches into populations already at high risk. Restricting movement in and out of refugee camps will be a nightmare. These camps are dependent on inflow of supplies, services and materials, and refugees routinely come and go for work. But we can promote safety in camps by increasing the supply of fresh water, and the number of hand-washing stations, infection control points and public health communications. Trusted relief workers will be tasked with distributing key messages. Refugees know us and trust us; they will listen to us about the risks they face, how to stay healthy, and what to do if they feel ill. We'll encourage people who are sick to get treatment and self-isolate. (from Bob Kitchen of International Rescue Committee)



Pray for refugees in the camps in Syria, Iraq and Greece also for the poorest countries like India where people live hand-to-mouth and face starvation.



The Madonna and Child with an escaped goldfinch by Guercino — early 1630s Italian — this as a symbol of Jesus' Resurrection



Charm is from the old English c'irm, describing the birds' twittering song - not their personalities as they are constantly squabbling.



The modern English artist shows the Christ Child with a very jaggy thistle and a goldfinch in hand — this a symbol of what Jesus will have to face