

PASTORAL LETTER – JANUARY 2020

As a New Year dawns, there are many challenges that face our communities, society, our nation and, indeed, the planet, this wonderful creation that God has entrusted to our care. None of these challenges are insurmountable, of course. We go into 2020 knowing that God is already there and that, as Christmas so powerfully reminded us, with God, all things are possible.

A story that has come to mean a lot to me over the years, is this:

‘A young girl was walking along a beach upon which thousands of starfish had been washed up during a terrible storm. When the girl came to each starfish, she would pick it up and throw it back into the ocean. Other people on the beach watched her with amusement.

She had been doing this for some time when a man approached her and said, “Little girl, why are you doing that? Look at this beach! You can’t save all these starfish. You can’t even begin to make a difference!”

The girl seemed suddenly crushed and deflated. But, after a few moments, she bent down, picked up another starfish and hurled it as far as she could into the ocean. Then, she looked up at the man and replied, “Well, I made a difference to that one.”

The man looked at the girl inquisitively and thought about what she had done and said. Inspired, he joined the little girl in throwing starfish back into the sea. Soon, others joined in, and all the starfish were saved.’

The meaning of this simple, almost childlike, story, is so rich, so powerful and so full of potential! It’s why I turn to it time and again. It’s a reminder that, in the places where we live and work, in the groups and societies that we belong to, in our communities and, yes, in the wider world around us, *we can make a difference for good*. What will you do?

So, whatever lies before us, whatever 2020 has in store, let us walk into it *together*, believing that, in our own way, there is something unique and special for each one of us to do. And, above all else, let’s go into the New Year with these words of hope ringing in our ears. They come from the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy,

‘The eternal God is your refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms.’ (NIV)

With love and every good wish for the New Year,

Scott
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Team Vicar