**March 2020**

"*Can we go to heaven now?*"   One of my children asked me this question today. They had been listening to a bible story and there was a glorious depiction of Jesus with all the different nationalities and cultures worshiping the Lamb together.

"*Daddy Please, can we go now … I want to see Jesus!*" If only I had faith like this. The closure of all the schools in Italy has raised a number of questions in the children's minds. They hear all sorts of stories from their friends, amici who have overheard mummy and daddy talking about "the cona virus." They sense a new anxiety in Mummy's instruction to "WASH YOUR HANDS."  Moreover, they see how quiet the normally packed streets of Rome have become. The atmosphere has changed and they can feel it. However, their reaction embodies a peace lacking in all the adults panicking around them.

"*God please make everyone better.*" As I listen to the chaos unfolding around me, I can't help taking comfort from these prayers. The children seem to understand something that society is fast abandoning. With the increasing tension many Asian people have experienced terrible treatment (even those from countries thousands of miles away from the outbreak). Italians too are now facing the same reactions abroad.

In her pastoral letter to the churches in Italy, the Moderator encouraged us all to ensure that we do not allow the crisis to change us into monsters. While in the past, such a situation could isolate us from each other, digital technology allows us to remain connected. However, instead of fake news, we have been encouraged to share the love of Christ through social media. In areas where churches are closed, Christians have tried to share words of hope and encouragement through any means possible.

*"Tankyou God for findin medson for the conaviras.*" The children's prayers reveal an implicit trust - a faith we lost when the virus started to spread throughout the country and beyond. Their minds are not on stockpiling or the shortages of masks and paracetamol. They think only of what they will do when all this over. "*Please Jesus, I want to go to the park*." If only we could all become like little children (Mt 18:3)

Please pray for us, that we all stay well and that we can understand sufficiently how to help our children do their italian homework; which their teacher sends (in Italian) to all the parents through whatsapp (our hair may be grey by the end of this ;-)