

Read Archbishop Justin's reflection on Radio 4's Thought For The Day on the first anniversary of the UK's national lockdown.

A year ago we went into lockdown. We measure the losses since in deaths. We measure them also in so many other ways. Lost days at school.

Lost contacts with friends and families. Lost opportunities to hug, to touch, to say hello, to say farewell. The losses in the economy that affect our lives and futures. The losses of sport and other great occasions, of festivals and mass gatherings in the arts and music. The loss of choices.

Covid has touched everything and everyone. Unconnected events have been changed. Weddings, funerals, birth celebrations, falling in love, dating, mourning and celebrating... Going to work, going to friends, going for a walk, going shopping. Everything we do has been different.

One of the great songs of lament to God in the bible begins "by the rivers of Babylon we sat down and wept.". An anniversary is a time to lament, to mourn, to sit and weep for what could have been and is not. Pause for a while today, remember what has been lost, above all *who* has been lost. Lament - for to do so is to honour and treasure. As a Christian I follow and love Jesus Christ who loved and mourned his friends, his country, suffering.

Anniversaries are also moments of new beginnings. It is just a day. But it is also a moment. And one of the signs of being human - of being spiritual as well as material - is that we make moments that pass into moments of significance. The anniversary calls on us to ask where we are going?

Shortly Christians will celebrate Easter, when we believe Jesus Christ rose from the dead and showed the victory of God's life. Jews will celebrate Passover, the liberation from slavery in Egypt, and next month Muslims will observe the holy month of Ramadan.

What do we want to build as a society? Surely it is a living memorial to loss - and an expression of what we long for. Imagine it; then let us strive for a society that is just and good, that speaks of the victory of life and hope.

2 min read

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