



from Garth...

Three messages from the Global Village

As we move into Holy Week here are three messages from our global village. These three messages are from very different places around the world, and yet they are similar and remind us that we are a global village and all are human beings made in the image of God.

First a voice from India, then news from Ritsona refugee camp in Greece, then a message from an Amos partner in Bethlehem. *What we have in common is we are all locked down as we head together into Holy Week.*

1 Locked Down in Holy Week

Some of you may be familiar with Rev. Prem Mitra from Bangalore – in the Church of South India and Chairman of [A Rocha India](#). When I was recording [The Dalit Drum](#) with Paul Field we met up with Prem and he was very helpful and inspiring. Later he came and spoke at the [Greenbelt Festival](#). He sent us some greetings the other day that I thought gave a clear insight into the struggles in India in these times.

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Liberator Jesus Christ.

We are all locked down in our homes. We are not able to conduct church services, so many of us are using prerecorded or chat apps to conduct services.

But the worst situation is for migrant people who have come from north India and northeast India to work in the cities and towns - most of them are Dalits or tribal people. The state borders are

blocked so they cannot move from one state to another. Some have to pass from one state to another to reach their villages, but the state Governments are not allowing them. There are no buses or trains so it becomes very difficult. Near my church there are some people who have come from North Karnataka. They are facing a lot of difficulties - they depend on daily wages but the work has stopped. As a church we are planning to help them.

There are questions that come to mind in this crisis

How do you discuss self-quarantine with a person sharing a tiny shanty with 10 people in a slum?

How do you advise social distancing to a manual scavenger (Dalits who empty certain types of dry toilets)?

How do you tell Dalits and tribal people who struggle for one meal a day, to prioritise hand sanitisers?

How do you educate tuberculosis survivors about cough etiquette?



Rev Prem Mitra

An economic catastrophe

Economically, lock downs, restricted travel, ban on public gatherings, and work from home, will force the informal sector workforce to lose wages. Small shop owners and factory workers will suffer losses reminiscent of recession. Families of daily-wage earners have been forced into poverty, children into malnutrition and workers into unemployment. Moreover, it is a time when unemployment rates are at a 45-year high. **This epidemic can turn into an economic catastrophe insidiously killing more people than Covid-19.**

A few months back we had a lot of constitutional laws passed in parliament. This has resulted in hundreds of thousands of people in India protesting against the new citizenship law, which discriminates against Muslims. But many Dalits and Dalit Christians fear it will also make conditions worse for them.

The laws passed want to emphasise that India is one nation with the Hindu ideology but India is a country of communities separated by region, religion, caste and language, and it remains a country of many communities.

This is why B.R. Ambedkar (Dalit and major architect of Indian constitution), in his concluding speech in the Constituent Assembly, had called India a “nation in the making”. **In a nation, the citizens must have a shared joy, a shared sorrow and a shared dream.**

A prayer for us all

Gracious God, as we weather the storms of life,

may we look to you as our shelter and source of strength
Bless and comfort all who have been experiencing difficult times.
We pray in the name of Jesus
Amen.
Please pray for us as we pray for you
Prem Mitra



Women working with the life jackets

2 Love Welcomes – in Ritsona refugee camp Greece

Some of you know our daughter Abi. Abi is the Co-Founder of a charity called **Love Welcomes**.

Love Welcomes currently works with

refugee women in Ritsona Camp in Greece. They reclaim the life vests and blankets worn by frightened, exhausted refugees as they wash up on European shores. Their team of refugee women then transform them into beautiful, handmade home products that are sold all over the world. **The work of Love Welcomes in the camp has provided work for over 40 women plus benefits for the camp.**

A recent urgent message from Abi

I want to share that yesterday twenty-three people tested positive for Coronavirus in Ritsona refugee camp where we work. This is the first refugee camp in Greece to be hit since the outbreak of the virus.

We are all devastated by this news and the women tell us they are very scared of the speed at which the virus could now spread.

The whole camp has been put on lockdown, and everyone is quarantined in their cramped isoboxes - the containers



where they live.

Abi with Hiva, one of the team leaders

Our main priority is the wellbeing of the refugees and we are doing everything we can to support them. The camp had already grown threefold since the start of the year so every organisation offering support is financially stretched to the max.

Coronavirus now puts a massive strain on everyone to deliver access to basic health, safety, security and a decent standard of living.

The women we work with take time and care to make all our products, we connect deeply and personally with each of them and support them on their difficult life journey.

The Greek Government has described the camps as a “ticking time bomb”. The refugees themselves know this and are scared. We received a message today from our workshop manager saying: **"This is so scary I feel very sad right now."**

There are over 2500 people living in the camp - the fear of the refugees is that this could spread very quickly.

Overnight, all access to the camp has been restricted with police surrounding it. Additional medical staff will be sent to the area and all residents will be screened.

God be our helper

One woman said “God be our helper - we are not afraid and we wish security and peace for the whole world.”

The Government has tested 47 people, 23 have tested positive. None of the 23 have had any symptoms of the disease so far and no staff were found to be carrying the virus. In light of this news we are appealing for support. Any donations received will be dispersed among the organisations on the frontline in the camp trying to deliver the most basic of services and also to the refugee community themselves. If you would like to donate we will ensure that it directly supports the refugees where we work.

Abi Hewitt

[click here to donate to Love Welcomes](#)



*In the Quiet -
Garth sings with
his daughter Abi*

Take time to pause in Holy Week -

Maybe on Maundy Thursday or Holy Saturday – find a little stillness in the storm and give yourself time to be quiet and renew your strength.

[Click here for a meditative song, *In the Quiet*, which I sing with Abi.](#)

3 The once vibrant city of Bethlehem has turned into a ghost town

by Zoughbi Zoughbi

**Greetings from Bethlehem and from Wi'am Centre in particular,
We appreciate your solidarity, empowerment and support.
The once vibrant city of Bethlehem has turned into a ghost town.
No businesses, no educational centers, no institutions, no tourists, or
visitors.**

Prior to the Corona virus the unemployment rate was at a staggering 31%, and now it has skyrocketed. Fear, hopelessness, helplessness and despair, are the overwhelming feelings of the mass of the population. People are worried... and fear a bleak future. Many have lost their jobs, especially those previously employed in the tourism sector; Churches and mosques are closed, and we have found a new spirituality during our confinement to our homes, in our connections to our neighbours and friends, and in our home prayers.

As we dream of a healthy world free of COVID-19, we also dream of a better future for Palestinians, free of occupation, blockade, and discrimination. As Palestinians, we have been suffering since 1917, but we have hope and always find ways to reactivate based on our faith and through our partners.

*We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed;
perplexed, but not in despair;
persecuted, but not abandoned;
struck down, but not destroyed.*

*We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus,
so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.
2 Corinthians 4:8-10 (NIV)*

Through online
helplines, calls, and
Social Media, Wi'am
staff are providing our
people with
psychological advice
and encouragement.
We have managed to

help many families with basic needs. We also help people to know more about protecting their families from the virus.

We are praying and hoping that it does not have to take too long, and that the country will not suffer too hard from the pandemic.

We pray for your countries too.

Let Hope Rise in all our nations.

Our hope anchors in our Saviour.

We pray that we can speak encouragement to each other...

**Prayers heal,
and solidarity strengthens.**

Zoughbi Zoughbi



Wi'am, The Palestine Conflict Transformation Centre, Bethlehem

Wi'am are one of **Amos Trust's** partners - to support them and the other Amos partners and their work in this difficult time, do **click here to support The Amos Trust Coronavirus Appeal** if you are in a position to do that.

Finally a song and a prayer for Good Friday

Jesus of the Scars

You can listen to the song here

If we have never sought, we seek you now;
Your eyes burn through the dark our only stars;
We must have sight of thorn-marks on your brow,
We must have you, O Jesus of the scars.

The heavens frighten us, they are too calm;
In all the universe we have no place
Our wounds are hurting us; where is the balm?
Lord Jesus, by your scars we know your grace

O Jesus of the scars we seek you now
O Jesus of the scars we seek you now
We must have sight of the thorn-marks on your brow
We must have you, O Jesus of the scars

The other gods were strong but you were weak;
They rode, but you did stumble to a throne;
But to our wounds only God's wounds can speak,
And not a god has wounds but you alone.

music Garth Hewitt

poem by Edward Shillito, written at the end of the 1st World War

Prayer for Easter 2020

O God whether in India, Greece or Bethlehem
Or anywhere else in our global village
Lead us through the wilderness of worry, despair,
Illness, sorrow and suffering
And lead our wounded world to the resurrection of hope.
May we all learn from this worldwide virus
That we are all in this together.
So no more violence and war,
No more greed and selfishness –
It is time to support one another
And genuinely love our neighbour as ourself.



©2020 Garth Hewitt Foundation | 186 Hykeham Road, Lincoln, LN6 8AP

[Web Version](#)

[Preferences](#)

[Forward](#)

[Unsubscribe](#)

