

A reflection by Janet on Romans 8

We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. (Romans 8:22-23)

There were three of us expecting our third babies within a few days of each other in July 1985. Both of my sons had arrived 10 days early so I was sort of expecting this to happen again. But babies come when they are ready! By my due date both of the other mums had produced beautiful bouncy babies so I was very eager just to get on with it.

Finally, a few days later I went into labour. When Tim and I arrived at the maternity unit all was progressing well. Contractions were coming regularly and the midwife told us that baby would be with us soon. I was ready to start the third stage of labour and to push with the next contraction.

My response was not, I think, what either she or I expected. "Do I have to?" I asked, "I remember this bit from last time and I didn't like it very much!" But of course, we both knew it had to be done. There is no going back; once labour has begun it has to run its course. And of course, once my beautiful daughter arrived that intense pain was forgotten as I held her in my arms for the first time.

The pain of childbirth is intense, it's unavoidable and has to be endured.

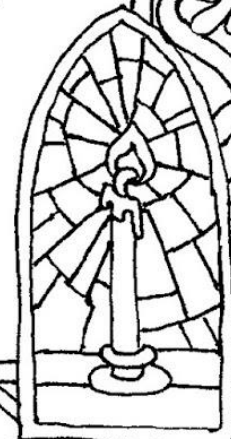
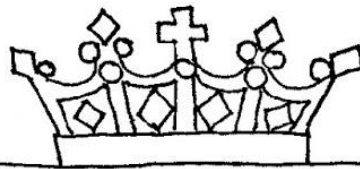
There is, perhaps, a powerful comparison between the pain of childbirth and Paul's call and ministry. Once he set out on the purpose God called him to, there was no turning back if new churches were to be born. He suffered wave after wave of intense unavoidable pain throughout his life; enduring being imprisoned, ship wrecked and much more as he sought to fulfil his call. Yet in the midst of it all Paul affirms that it is a pain that leads to new birth. Though he cannot yet see it, it gives him hope. He can bear his labour pains with patience because "For in hope we were saved." (Romans 8:24).

The last few months have been painful and frustrating to many of us. Seeking ways to keep connected whether to loved ones or to activities we enjoy has been hard. Some of us have felt imprisoned in our homes. Many have had to learn to be teachers, carers, techno wizards and so many other roles we don't feel equipped for. It's been easy to feel caught between a rock and a hard place battling the stormy seas of Covid-19.

But Paul reminding us that we are "the children of God". If we accept this about ourselves we share that hope which Paul speaks of. We live in the Spirit of God. As we emerge from lockdown we know we cannot go back. We wait to see what will be born in us and in the church. We cannot see it yet, but we can trust that whatever it is it will be beautiful and full of opportunity.

For I consider
that the
sufferings of this
present time are
not worth
comparing with
the glory that
will be revealed
in us.

Romans 8:18



Feeling Crafty?

Why not make a “Child of God” Crown?

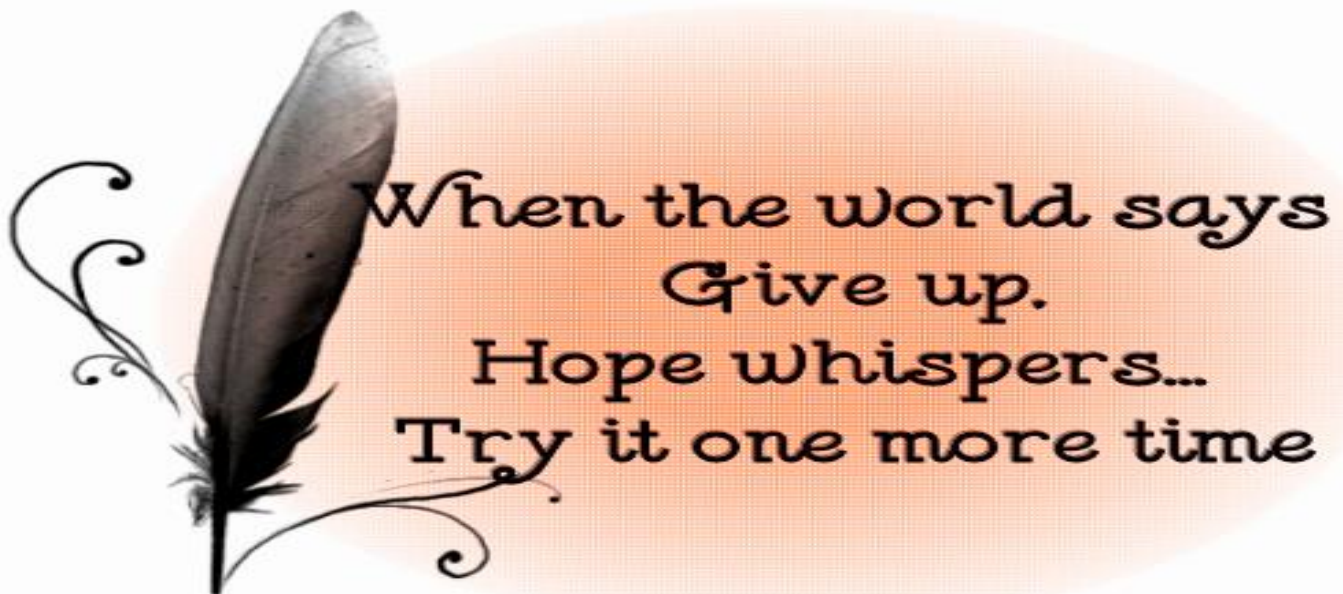


This one is made out of paper triangles all joined together. You could use sugar paper, old wall paper or even newspaper to make this crown and then decorate it as you like.

Or maybe a “Hope” Windsack

Instructions

- 1, Print out the template below – use 2 print outs if you want to make it bigger.
2. Glue together to make a cylinder.
3. Glue strips of paper, material or ribbon on the inside edge of the bottom of the cylinder so they hang down.
4. Make 2 holes one each side of the top of the cylinder and thread a piece of string through, then tie the ends together.
5. Your wind sock is ready to hang up where it will catch the breeze



See how they've grown!

