

27<sup>th</sup> March

Please keep India, and so many other places in the world that have far less than we have, in your prayers.

You will have heard that India is under lockdown. However, I'm daily getting pictures on my Facebook feed of pastors, even Bishops, who have applied to the police and had the restrictions lifted so that they can feed the poor, the hungry and the police. The polite lines are great, but social distancing isn't there really; people are handing out food to others, without any gloves or hand sanitizer, so the virus can easily be transmitted from person to person. And then, there are the photos (for there have to be photos) and all the church officials are standing close to one another, face masks on, but nothing else to protect them, to be recorded for posterity.

Sitting in lockdown, in front of a computer, with a government that is doing something, and a church that has taken health issues very seriously, it is easy to feel powerless. What does anyone do in the face of overwhelming poverty – stay safe at home, or risk everything including your life and that of your family (but also, as these pictures show, risk passing infection around the poor rapidly) in order to give people a food parcel. What would we do if we were there? I'm sure there are better solutions to deal with the logistics, but they wouldn't be 'Indian'.

What I'm not seeing are photos of the hospitals, where staff don't have anything like enough PPE, or even enough stuff to keep them clean, dealing with those how are infected.

So, in my sense of powerlessness and frustration, and fear, what can we do, but pray. Each time I prepare food, or unpack the veg box with great angst about transferring the virus from the veg box to the kitchen surface, and a flurry of handwashing and wiping down of surfaces, I'm going to make this a time that I also offer to God my friends and others who don't have the same luxuries of food, distance and sanitation – and those who can see no other way to show God's love in action.