

For further reflection

"There is a time in your life when you expect the world to be always full of new things. And there comes a day when you realise that is not how it will be at all. You see that life will become a thing made of holes. Absences. Losses. Things that were there and are no longer. And you realise, too, that you have to grow around and between the gaps."

From the wilderness of Lent, though you can look back, westwards, do you have the courage with Christ and in Christ to face fully into the east and welcome what is to come? Are you worshipping, serving, praying and continually learning to give you your sense of direction: to help you find 'true north'? Perhaps whatever you are celebrating and what are you thankful for reminds you of God's faithfulness and gives you courage to face east!?

If we did this exercise together, as a whole church community, I wonder what we would learn?

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. See if there is any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.'

Psalm 139.23-24

Spiritual Healthcheck

from 'Listening to your Life'
by Julia Mourant

The 'Wilderness Season' of Lent offers an opportunity for a spiritual healthcheck: a review of where you are and how you are being fed, sustained, nurtured and challenged by your faith.

Can you say 'it is well with my soul'?

The points of the compass - north, south, east and west - have long been a natural focus for thinking about life, meaning, purpose and action: so divide up a large sheet of paper or a notebook into four sections and consider the questions overleaf. I pray that this activity will help you to gaze at the horizon and to notice where God is working in you and through you.



Revd Sarah



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North

- What is stable in my life?
- What gives me a sense of direction?
- What can I truly rely on?
- What gives me a sense of rootedness?
- Are there certain 'givens' in my life, which I cannot change or escape from?

Center

Begin and end with prayer - perhaps safely light a candle. Ask God to guide you, that the Holy Spirit might stir your feelings, emotions and physical responses. Note them down in each section. Take your time. Don't rush. Leave space for further thoughts or even surprises. Maybe add your own questions?! It might take an hour or a day. You might repeat the exercise in a few weeks or months or next year to see how you have changed and grown in God.

South

- What is truly flourishing for me right now?
- Where am I seeing fruitfulness, harvest, joy?
- Are earlier hopes, dreams and promises being lived out?
- What deeply touches my soul with hope?

West

- What things in my life are coming to an end?
- What am I glad to give up, move beyond, get past?
- What is being taken from me?
- What must I lay down with thanksgiving?
- What memories am I treasuring?

East

- What new things might be over the horizon?
- Where am I waiting in the dark for a new dawn?
- What barely discernible glimpses of change or promises can I see?
- What do I hope for?
- Where am I called to invest my time, my resources, my love?