*I can't take any credit for the content of this email. It consists of some words of wisdom and encouragement from Fr Nicholas Stebbing who is a member of the Community of the Resurrection at Mirfield in Yorkshire and which I found in a journal recently. It is called 'Christian Isolation'.

The great French philosopher, Blaise Pascal, said: "All of humanity's problems stem from man's inability to sit quietly in a room alone." The Psalmist said: "Be still and know that I am God." Can we take these truths to ourselves during this time of Coronavirus isolation?
This is very much against the culture of our time. We want to be busy. We must have full diaries. We need to be out and about at night enjoying ourselves. Admittedly we do spend a lot of time alone, but on our computers, or phones, checking Twitter, FaceBook, WhatsApp or watching TV. Is this how we are spending this time of isolation? Can we do better than that and maybe learn from centuries of monastic wisdom where silence, being alone, being still is central to the life? Here are some tips:*

* *Welcome the experience. Don't fight it. See it as an opportunity and see what you can learn from it.*
* *Doing nothing is good. Don't feel guilty. Fields need to lie fallow to recover their fertility. Human beings need recreation, rest, holidays if they are going to perform well at work. So use this time to do nothing: look out of the window and watch the world go by; sit in the garden and watch the new life begin if it's not too cold; make a cup of coffee and sit still and enjoy it instead of gulping it in between other things. Take time to enjoy food, a glass of wine, even a gin and tonic!*
* *Some time with emails, FaceBook, TV or other types of communication is good for keeping in touch, but don't spend too much time on it. Ration it. It becomes obsessive and unbalanced. It often fills our minds with trivia, unhelpful gossip or fears.*
* *Read the Bible, read a devotional book, pray. You probably do this anyway but we all tend to do this in a rush. Now we have the chance to take time, settle down, know that God is God. We have time to listen to God. We have time to let God work quietly in us. We can let God be God.*
* *If you are sharing this time of isolation with others don't be together all of the time. It's OK to go to your room to seek solitude. You will then have something to share when you come together and you will avoid occasions of impatience and frustration.*
* *Remember you are part of the Body of Christ. That is not just other Christians around you, praying: it literally means that you are in the mystical body of Christ. Christ is with you all the time. You are not alone. Just as blood circulates in a body keeping the whole body alive, so the Holy Spirit is constantly moving between keeping us alive in Christ and alive together.*
* *Remember those like doctors, nurses, food providers who are working terribly hard. Remember those in prison or those who through illness are forced into isolation. Pray for them out of the frustrations of your isolation and share with them your knowledge that God is here.*

*"Be still and know that I am God."*