

## Thought for the Day

*Thought for the day is based on one of the day's lectionary readings.*

*For the Bible online, go to: <http://bible.oremus.org/>*

*Choose your version (we use NRSV in church)*

*Copy and paste the reference into the search box and the passage will be displayed.*

Friday 3 April

John 12.20-36a

*'Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it produces much fruit.'*

The other day my husband and I spent some time sowing seeds in pots which we hope will grow into fruitful vegetable plants. There are still spare seeds left in the packets – no chance of them growing – only the ones we have sown. It is like a kind of burial, putting them into the earth – ancient peoples thought of this as the seed dying and being buried, so that it could come to life and grow. I do hope our seeds will germinate...

Reflecting on this paradox today I am thinking of the front-line NHS staff tackling the coronavirus. Those thousands of dedicated people, caring for the very sick and risking their own health and lives in the process, as well as dealing with the trauma and pressure of patients flooding in for treatment and being short staffed. How well they deserve the 'Clap for the Carers' on Thursday nights at 8pm – have you taken part? This public expression of gratitude was started by Annemarie Plas, a Dutch yoga teacher in London, and it went viral on the first occasion on 26<sup>th</sup> March.

*'Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life.'* We might find this odd – life is good - are we really expected to hate our lives? I don't think so. Jesus was making a strong contrast for effect. The thought is that clinging on to life isn't the way to act. When we are prepared to give of ourselves deeply and sacrificially, we gain so much. One can only discover the truth of that by experiencing it. Jesus took it to the utmost by giving up his life for others; and in so doing, brought resurrection life to us. As Paul put it, he was *'the firstfruits of those who sleep'* (1 Corinthians 15.20).

*Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy in this time of uncertainty and distress. Sustain and support the anxious and fearful, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may rejoice in your comfort, knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.*