

Warning – may contains nuts!

Eyewitness account - Wednesday, November 4, a supermarket near you: Toilet roll (large, 25 packs) – check, pasta (50 packs) – check, flour (30 kg) – check. So, I am thinking, either lockdown is re-starting, or someone is making the largest papier-mâché spaghetti man ever, or perhaps there is a symptom of Covid-19 that we are not being told about. Why does it not click with some people that the only way that we will run out of loo roll is because people are panic buying it?

Another world – I guess, like me, you were not invited to Kim Kardashian's 40th birthday party. Not being an avid celebrity watcher, I am OK with that, but I can understand why there were different reactions to reports of her supposedly 'humble' party. Her seven-day party on a private island for a select few was widely derided as sadly inappropriate and out of touch with the current times. Hopefully, without being self-righteous or holier than thou, most people would concur with this. So, Kim, if you are reading this, how about spending an equivalent amount of money organising a party for those who are suffering from the consequences of Covid-19, either financially or medically? Maybe not so YouTube or Instagram friendly methinks!

Gogglebox – on Sunday evenings, I have very much enjoyed watching Michael Palin remembering and re-visiting the amazing travel series that he embarked on during the 1980's and early 90's. His journeys might not look very ground-breaking now, but at the time, they were wonderful and eye-opening to many people. However, two rather sad things struck me – firstly, the number of places, especially in Africa, where he would not be able to visit at this current time because of conflict, threat of terrorism, etc. And secondly, that some of Michael's actions & mannerisms might be deemed to be politically incorrect by some individuals nowadays, whereas in reality, he was just being friendly and welcoming, and this was enough to connect with most people.

Gone are the days when modelling used to immediately have the connotation of some suitably thin and beautiful person walking down

the catwalk in designer clothes. In recent times, it is much more likely to be related to an academic who is predicting the spread of Covid-19, the winner of a general election or whether Liverpool will beat Man City on Sunday. I have espoused before in this blog on my keen lifelong interest in mathematics but making decisions based on big data and algorithms without a profound sense of the humane leaves me rather cold. It is one thing for Amazon delivering my favourite coffee, but anything involving we humans is altogether rather tougher to predict.

As I am writing this, the result of the of the US presidential election is still unknown. It is sometimes hard to watch the TV coverage as a non-American and understand precisely what is going on. Also, the endless stream of 'talking heads' used as time fillers between real news items can get wearisome. Amid the claims and counterclaims, we can only hope and rely on God's will being played out. However, you do get the feeling that it is far from over. We pray for justice, integrity, and the rule of law, and for those of us who have friends or families there.

Churches and places of worship are once again closed. Remembrance services are limited to say the least, and planning for Christmas services and events is a bit of a lottery at the moment. There does not seem to be a lot of, or indeed, any evidence that Covid-19 is spread in churches. So, we hope that our government will reconsider this restriction. And we hope and pray that lockdown will not be extended into Christmas and that we will be able to celebrate the birth of our Lord and have our families get together with as much freedom as possible.

PA 05.11.20