

Jannali Uniting Church



April 2020

To show that Jesus' love for every person invites and commits us to build a loving community of worship and service, compassion and acceptance.

Holy Communion is served on the third Sunday of each month, everyone is welcome

Lent is a period of fasting, moderation, and self denial traditionally observed by Catholics and some Protestant denominations.

It begins with Ash Wednesday and ends with Easter Sunday

For videos of church services

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A blessing in disguise Young - Dae Lee

There once lived an old man near the northern border of China. One day, his horse went over that border and ran away. Neighbours comforted him for his loss, but he answered, "Who knows this will be a blessing?" After a few days, that horse came back with a female horse, his wife. His neighbours were amazed and celebrated him, but he told them, "who knows this will cause a disaster?" As he had a new horse, the son of this old man tried to tame her, but he fell from the horse and his legs were broken. His neighbours comforted him again, but he answered like before, "Who knows there will be some blessing thanks to this accident?" After the accident, some foreign soldiers invaded the country and many young males had to participate and died, but his son saved his life thanks to his injury.

Almost always there are two different faces in the events happening in our lives - positive/negative, good/bad, profit/loss, joy/sorrow, up/down ... And the harsh reality is nothing comes in with single face. From our life experience and subsequent wisdom acquired from series of mistakes and failures, we have learnt how to see good from bad and bad from good. There is nothing like 100% profit and 0% loss. When we're offered a free lunch, be ready for a pain in the neck.

This recent situation of social distancing and closing down in Australia puts us all into a completely new, different and difficult world. We live in 2020 but are not allowed to visit family members and friends, have meal together at home, park or restaurant, visit shopping centres and the church on Sunday for worship. This is a self-isolation and separation from all kinds of human interaction, thus we feel lonely and marginalised. We miss families and friends, especially church friendship and fellowship. Many of us have been seeing each other almost every week for many many years. This is the nature of Christian congregation life, but the problem is that we don't know when we can get together again.

However, is this all we have right now? Is there no positive side at all? I'd like to emphasise that we're in the season of Lent, which has been traditionally set aside for remembering life and ministry of Jesus and reflecting on his passion and suffering. The present world-wide situation pushes us all into the long Lent so that, whether we like it or not, we need to meet Jesus again, read the Bible seriously, pray hard for the world and church and reflect on the meaning of our faith in God through Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit. In the loneliness and marginalisation, then we'll find Jesus and ourselves so this will be a moment of revival.

Most of all, while the whole world stops in lock down, people stay home, cars are parked in the garage, offices and shopping centres and factories close down, now the earth can have a break and a deep breath in the midst of decreasing pollution in land, air and sea. Likewise, all of us can do something we have not been able to do because of endless schedules and plans and duties. There has been no time for those things we wished to do, and suddenly all we have is time. Therefore it's unexpected God's blessing for the whole humanity to take care of ourselves and the planet. Disaster rolls over and becomes blessing for those who are ready.



I am the Resurrection

Hello to all my JUC friends,

Just a few weeks ago, we watched our TV screens in horror as Covid 19 laid waste to Wuhan – an apocalyptic scenario which seemed totally unreal and far away.

Who would have thought it would so quickly swamp the world and challenge our way of life and our beliefs? Yet here we are in isolation for an unknown time. On our TV screens and within our families, we see the desperation of countless people who have lost their livelihoods. Civilization seems like a house of cards which is wobbling, the slightest wind threatening to topple it.

We feel powerless, threatened, anxious and devastated, struggling to find a path through the coming weeks. It is a time of Faith being truly tested and, for many including me, a time of reflection on life and what is important.

I have been asked what I miss most about the isolation and what I like about it. You may be thinking, "What's to like?" especially if you live alone. Anyway, here are my thoughts.

Things I miss most:-

- Obviously, all of you and our Sunday worship, fellowship and morning tea. It seems so long already and I look forward to the Great Day when we can resume.
- We are a very touchy, feely family, so I really miss the hugs and kisses.
- Swimming laps at Sutherland pool was my favourite daily ritual. So peaceful, arm over arm, watching the sunbeams make patterns in the water and thinking of a multitude of things or of nothing.
- Meeting friends for laughter, meals or coffee.
- Cooking up a storm at home for family and friends.
- Going to movies, the theatre or playing Bridge.

Things I like about it:-

- After a lifetime of rushing about, I love the fact that I can wake up and do not have to be anywhere. I can watch that golden autumn light creep through the cracks in the blinds, listen to the deafening chorus of birds, watch the lorikeets play in their water bowl on our top balcony. (We call it, "The resort.") We watch them bully the sulphur crested cockatoos into standing aside and waiting patiently for a drink and bathe so vigorously that we have to refill their bath several times a day.
- I love gazing over our lush, green valley, enjoying the trees, the sunshine, the rain.
- Libraries are closed, but I managed to borrow 21 books on the last day when the librarian said to take as many as you like and keep them for as long as it takes for libraries to re-open. It was like a party up there as we all scanned those shelves and stuffed books into shopping bags. I am reading book number 3.
- I love watching Netflix or catch up TV. (Try to limit updates on the pandemic to 1 per day) crosswords, Sudoku, jigsaw puzzles and cooking.
- I love the peace and beauty of walking along the river, often a time of reflection for me and I often hum hymns in my head or have a bit of a chat with God.
- I love talking with my immediate family at home and catching up with others by phone, email or text.
- Probably quite strangely, I enjoy reflecting on massive hardships faced in the past – World Wars, The Great Depression, Fires, Drought, Floods and previous pandemics. We survived! And we will survive this.

Take one day at a time and God's Blessings on you all.

Julie Blair

Greetings Everyone, and May The Peace of our Lord be with you all.

As I told Barbara Moore, I hadn't died, just moved and anyone who has moved will know it can be worse than death. Lucky for me the move happened before any lockdowns, and my wonderful family actually made it happen. Three daughters, two sons in law, one grandson, Jake, and my eldest granddaughter Ashleigh came up from Wollongong along with my three year old great grandson Austen, who was very keen to help. The boxes and stairs, (all 21 of them) proved a bit difficult for such a little boy, but he felt he was due a reward of an ice-cream from GiGi's (that's me) freezer. Then the big Boy, Jake (19), said; "What about me?"

All the boxes from storage, all the people, all in my tiny unit, all a bit much, I escaped to my balcony, yes I have a balcony, a trade-off for the steps, but I love my balcony. I can sit in the sun and read and in the moonlight? Well Romeo Romeo and all that. I am so lucky I have sons in law that are handymen, they put up all the blinds and curtains, the pictures are on hold at present. I rearranged all the cupboards, my son in law Andrew said; "I told the girls they were wasting their time putting things away, that you would do it your way".

It was a joy to unpack some of my treasures that I hadn't seen for three years, like the crystal bowl, a wedding present given to my mother, it went to Western Australia with her as a young bride and has travelled much since. I would have told you I wasn't a hoarder, but the boxes don't lie. Jake brought me one saying; "This is such a Nana thing". Apparently, my grandchildren have this saying, I am a bit bemused as to what is my thing, but Chris, my 18 year old grandson, who came over to put together a flat pack for me, said it again. Ashleigh assures me that while they are shaking their heads, it is said with love.

Well this box Jake gave me had written on it. 'Things I should have thrown away but couldn't! Throw away when I am dead.' My Jake thinks that is a 'cop out'. Well if you are bored enough and would like to know what was in The Box, let The Editor/Sub Editor know, and I will tell you next News Letter.

Tonight, my singing group is having a video sing a long, I wonder how that will go??? Keep safe everyone; remember there will be a New Dawn.

Carol Dawson

Good day to you all sitting at home in your enforced isolation. We have been told that we need to be socially isolating however I think that's the wrong message - we should be physically isolating but socially making as many connections as we possibly can. We've heard of the wonderful singing in Italy across the laneways and there was a lovely story of police doing a silly dance in the streets in Andorra in the Pyrenees to entertain the children. This newsletter contains a few messages to keep you connected with some people from church. I encourage you to pick up your phone and ring as many people as possible, as often as possible. We need to remember and remind each other that we are still a connected community. We still care for each other, even though we can't meet in person and give our usual hugs or pass the peace. Our traditional activities for Holy Week and over the Easter period are going to be very different this year, however the message remains the same. We are called to love one another. Happy Easter!

Barbara Moore

Robyn's thoughts on the "new normal" The plus side

1. Time to catch up on those UFOs (unfinished objects)
2. No need to pack away the jigsaw puzzle I'm working on and feeling no guilt when I spend hours doing it.
3. We can sleep in
4. Opportunity to clean out and sort those areas like the garage and the pantry!!
5. I can read a book without feeling guilty
6. We can chat to new people walking past our home....from a distance of course!
7. Home stays really tidy without grandkids visiting
8. Having faith that God is with us through all this and that it will be over one day

The tough bits

1. NO CAPPUCCINOS!!!!!!!!!!!!
2. Not being able to visit mum and dad and worrying that dad will not remember us when this is all over
3. Missing the cuddles with our kids and grandkids
4. Having to think twice before touching anything.....especially things delivered to our door!
5. Never really knowing what day it is!

Robyn Hely

The old Scottish way with Easter Eggs.

My parents migrated from Scotland in 1926 with three small children. (they had two more after arriving here, [I'm not that old]. Back in 1985 [no parents and one less sibling] we had a get together and I asked the two oldest in the family if they could remember a bit about Scotland. The following is just a small excerpt from my brother's memories.

"Down alongside the house and just a bit over, there was a burn. We used to play in it occasionally, but further up the hill there was a nice grassy slope and up there we used to go at Easter time. We'd go with anyone else who happened to be around, to roll our Easter Eggs. Easter eggs were always coloured. Mum always coloured them and they were always different colours. You couldn't eat your egg until it was cracked, and you couldn't crack it by jumping on it or anything like that, you had to roll it. We used to have egg rolling races down the hill, and when your egg cracked – well – at that point you were allowed to eat it."

We never lived anywhere with a nice grassy hill in my childhood. Anyone have anymore memories of childhood games? Frances Gammie

TV CHURCH

On our Facebook I found the 22 March Jannali Uniting Church service on about the following Tuesday. We loved it so much and it was wonderful to see Young-Dae and all his assistants in the comfort of our lounge room. So we looked with eager anticipation for the service on 29 March. On Sunday morning we got dressed in our Sunday clothes as if we were off to Church. We sat at the table with my tablet tuned to Facebook and scrolled down until I found the Jannali Uniting Church service and started up. But, alas, it was the service for the 22 March which we had already seen. Bitter disappointment so we just had to have a cappuccino and a piece of cake to console ourselves. Fast forward to Monday afternoon and while looking at Facebook what do I find but Jannali Uniting Church service for 29 March. So we set up the tablet on the table once more and in our casual clobber whole heartedly joined in watching wonderful service in our own Church. We joined in singing the hymns and listening attentively to all who took part in the service. Rev Paul was at his best as he sang "Them Dry Bones". How great is it that we and many of our Church congregation could be united in such a wonderful way. God has truly blessed us during these difficult times. Allen Gammie

Control and acceptance

Isolation is a word which has taken on an inherently negative meaning. Our gloomy association comes perhaps from the forced nature in which isolation usually occurs. We either impose isolation upon ourselves or are pushed into isolation by the community. In the case of social isolation today, we are obliged by the most foreign of forces, disease. In this way, isolation becomes an idea out of our control. A situation which cannot be remedied nor removed. However, we may be able to change this perspective. My present experience with isolation has already altered how I perceive a great deal of the world. The things we crave, the wants and needs of our everyday social life, and the generally unlimited capacity many of us have, to step outside of this bubble. Although it is true that some people are more social than others, the necessity of socialising still plays a dominant role in the lives of every person. As with all forms of deprivation then, the lack of socialising forces us to crave these things more. Whether it's going out to a bar, to the beach, to the pub, for dinner or simply for a day out, we miss the freedoms which we most take for granted. When we focus on the lack of something in our lives, we frequently attempt to fix it, to fill this lack with something else. Change is usually the primary option, but in this current situation it is near impossible to enact significant change. The nature of our current isolation requires something far more challenging than attempting change.

Acceptance of powerlessness. Our acceptance that this situation cannot be changed is the best method for defying the difficulties we face when we are trapped inside and away from many of the people we love. With acceptance, we can refocus our energies into other challenges. Pondering and overthinking only serve to distract us from this path, and constantly trying to find loopholes in a strict set of rules is a futile arrangement. I don't pretend that understanding acceptance is easy, and I certainly know that I haven't yet achieved it. But in the face of an immovable force and an impossible social change, it's our only option if we want to ever be remotely content. And when we come out the other side (which we certainly will), we can hopefully recall the lessons we learnt when access and openness were in short supply. This isolation may be out of our direct control, but if we act with purpose and direction, it can become a moment of divergence, and an action which we are able to reframe as one which we have some sway over, even in a small way.

Ewan Maddock

Birthday Cake Sunday

Happy Birthday to you.

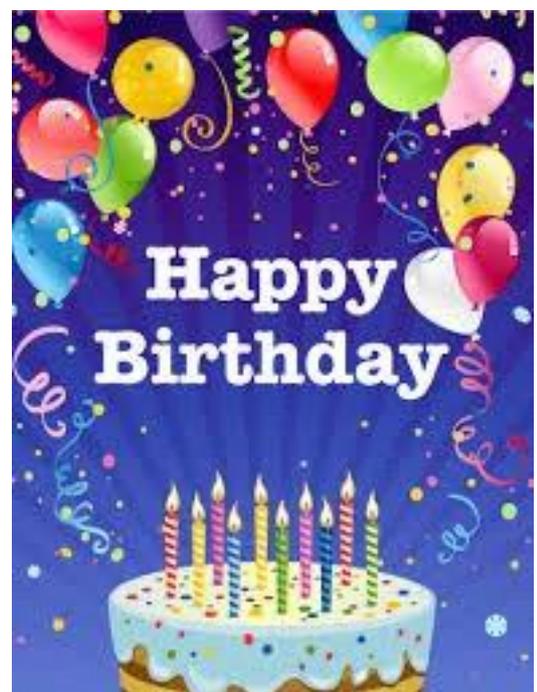
Happy Birthday to you.

Happy Birthday dear April Birthdays Happy Birthday to you.

May your special day be filled with God's rich blessings.

With love from all your friends and church family at Jannali Uniting.

Sorry you have to get your own cake.



THOUGHTS FOR OUR CHANGING TIMES 2

Here we are, another week on and already last week seems almost like another world. Each day brings some change in how we understand what is happening, and, if you use the internet, you will, like me, have had vivid images of the devastation this virus can bring. We hear the most extreme of stories. Thankfully there are also the things that give us hope that life is not all about anger in the supermarket (if you still go there) but about is also about the ways in which we seem to be connecting more with each other. At times like this we know how much we want to feel connected to family and friends, wherever they are. It's not surprising that phones sometimes take longer to connect, or that the email in-box has more coming into it than usual. This human connectedness is a basic need and people are finding wonderful ways of doing it: think of the images of people on balconies in Italy joining in singing or of impromptu concerts on balconies in Spain – countries where there has been so many challenges. It shows how much we can do for one another in simple ways. While this is a situation the like of which we have not faced before, it is not that unique. Throughout history there have been plagues. The black death in the mid-1300s, killed and estimated 75 – 200 million people in Eurasia, 30 – 60% of Europe's population. It was a time when the Christian community frequently performed acts of selfless courage. About 75% of clergy died as they performed the last rites for the sick. During this time, the extraordinary young woman we know as Julian of Norwich became an anchorite, after an illness that was expected to kill her but from which she recovered after seeing a vision of the cross at the foot of her bed. She entered a cell attached to a church and stayed there for the rest of her life. People came and spoke to her through a window and she gave them words of prayer, of wisdom and blessing. As plague and wars raged around, it was she who said the words that we treasure today: **"All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well"**.

These are good words for us when anxiety and fear shadow our lives, not least because we don't know what lies ahead. Our faith tells us that God lies ahead and that even now, we are given glimpses of what could be, not just for ourselves but for the whole world.

Our Lenten journey is still leading us towards Gethsemane and Golgotha. Like the disciples, we are still learning who this Jesus is for us in our here and now. Jesus, in John's gospel, speaks a lot about light and darkness. He knows about this. The light we find in him and in following his way shines gently on us. Even the smallest candle chases away the darkness around is. As is often said, "Light overcomes darkness; darkness can't overcome light." So maybe you can light a little candle, wherever you are. Throughout history, people put a candle in a window, as a symbol of hope. All around the world in these times, people are lighting candles in their houses. Maybe you can do the same in hope, in faith and in trust.

Rev. Mary Pearson, GRP Presbytery Minister

Vanessa Hawthorne (née Fyfe) says hello.

I miss lots of things about this isolation:

Going out to dinner with friends, movies, music, concerts and dancing, outings to the Art Gallery, visiting local businesses and browsing in shops.

I'll miss the family dinner at Easter and the visitors who can't come from New Zealand.

Most of all I miss not being able to plan and have something to look forward to.

As I'm still going to work on public transport, I'm pleased the peak hour hardly has any people on the trains, buses and ferries.

I've taken up crochet, jigsaw puzzles, listening to podcasts. I'm thankful that we have phones, internet, photos and connectivity so we can ring to talk through the changing situation.

I'm happy there is a sense of unity and community in this stressful time.

We're all in this together.

We will get through it.

Happy Easter

Vanessa Hawthorne

Kathy versus isolation

I'm not really a stay at home person...so this has been a bit of a challenge for me.... I do miss my activities and seeing people

I'm trying to stay positive and have managed to fill my days with CLEANINGhave been doing a lot of cleaning.you know you always clean the middle but not the corners...well not every week anyway....tidied wardrobes and drawers...

Also GARDENING....went to put the recycle in the bin... stopped to pull out a few weeds... came back inside one and a half hours later...

I have also been going for a WALK each day ..a bit of fresh air... I miss the grandchildren popping in..but on Saturday we went on a "bear hunt" ...I don't know where the idea came from ...but people put a bear in their front window...and families go for a walk and find... we found 10

Hope everyone is well

Take care

God Bless

Kathy Graham



What do I miss in isolation?

I miss what I am called to do in person at "the village". The voluntary pastoral care is of course shut down.

Writing a weekly newsletter and reflection with prayers is something to fill that big void for me and hopefully the residents.

My work and routine have gone, so my daughter has given me a big box of craft items including a pink flamingo!

Knitting 100 x 4 inch squares with intricate patterns to make a blanket should see me through. (My daughter has been collecting the patterns for ages but never had time to make them). There are tapestries to go on with if that isn't enough and I've put learning to crochet on the back burner for now.

My daughter is working as a Registered Nurse with Nurses on Wheels and my son-in-law is a registered nurse at a nearby hospital working with possible Carona virus patients. Both are very busy people at present.

What do I like about being in isolation? Nothing!

Barbara Anderson

Treasurer says THANK YOU

What a fantastic group of people at Jannali Uniting who are so caring and aware of the changed situation for our church. In this stressful time of no face to face church services and no hall hire or fund raising activities our church building is silent. No activity at all now.

Fortunately, our Minister, Rev Young-Dae Lee is still working from home on creative ways to reach people through video and through the phone or email. He is still available for pastoral care. Our office assistant, Amanda, is still working in isolation as the BetterConnected office is closed for now. Everything depends on phone contact or email. Under these circumstances, just like at home, the church has bills to pay. We also pay our Minister and support the wider work of the Church.

Jannali has responded.

I would like to say a heartfelt thank you to all those who have continued with their planned giving one way or another. The cheques and money orders have arrived by post, the Direct Giving to JUC bank account has continued and in some cases increased for the period in recognition of the difficult time and stress on our budget with so many unknowns and months ahead. For those who are wondering how to continue their regular giving please contact Kevin or Paul through the Church Office 02 95283379 jannaliuniting@bigpond.com or use the information below.

1. POST cheques and money orders addressed to: Jannali Uniting Church PO BOX 104 Jannali, NSW, 2226
2. DIRECT GIVING -As a temporary measure you might like to deposit your giving by direct credit to: Jannali UC Giving Direct, BSB 634634, Account 1000 25899 - use your envelope number as a reference or 'Cash' if you don't use envelopes. Kevin Fyfe

Easter Reflection

Ragman by Walter Wangerin, Jr. I saw a strange sight. I stumbled upon a story most strange, like nothing in my life, my street sense, my sly tongue had ever prepared me for. Hush, child. hush now, and I will tell it to you.

Even before the dawn one Friday morning I noticed a young man, handsome and strong, walking the alleys of our City. He was pulling an old cart filled with clothes both bright and new, and he was calling in a clear tenor voice: 'Rags!' Ah, the air was foul and the first light filthy to be crossed by such sweet music.

'Rags! New rags for old! I take your tired rags! Rags!'

'Now this is a wonder,' I thought to myself, for the man stood six-feet-four, and his arms were like tree limbs, hard and muscular, and his eyes flashed intelligence. Could he find no better job than this, to be a ragman in the inner city? I followed him. My curiosity drove me. And I wasn't disappointed.

Soon the ragman saw a woman sitting on her back porch. She was sobbing into a handkerchief, sighing, and shedding a thousand tears. Her knees and elbows made a sad X. Her shoulders shook. Her heart was breaking.

The Ragman stopped his cart. Quietly, he walked to the woman, stepping round tin cans, dead toys, and Pampers.

'Give me your rag,' he said gently. 'and I'll give you another.'

He slipped the handkerchief from her eyes. She looked up, and he laid across her palm a linen cloth so clean and new that it shined. She blinked from the gift to the giver.

Then, as he began to pull his cart again, the Ragman did a strange thing: he put her stained handkerchief to his own face; and then he began to weep, to sob as grievously as she had done, his shoulders shaking. Yet she was left without a tear.

'This is a wonder,' I breathed to myself, and I followed the sobbing Ragman like a child who cannot turn away from mystery.

'Rags! Rags! New Rags for old!'

In a little while, when the sky showed grey behind the rooftops and I could see the shredded curtains hanging out black windows, the Ragman came upon a girl whose head was wrapped in a bandage, whose eyes were empty. Blood soaked her bandage. A single line of blood ran down her cheek.

Now the tall Ragman looked upon this child with pity, and he drew a lovely yellow bonnet from his cart.

'Give me your rag,' he said, tracing his own line on her cheek, 'and I'll give you mine.'

The child could only gaze at him while he loosened the bandage, removed it, and tied it to his own head. The bonnet he set on hers. And I gasped at what I saw: for with the bandage went the wound! Against his brow it ran a darker, more substantial blood -- his own!

'Rags! Rags! I take old rags!' cried the sobbing, bleeding, strong, intelligent Ragman.

The sun hurt both the sky, now, and my eyes; the Ragman seemed more and more to hurry.

'Are you going to work?' he asked a man who leaned against a telephone pole. The man shook his head. The Ragman pressed him: 'Do you have a job?'

'Are you crazy?' sneered the other. He pulled away from the pole, revealing the right sleeve of his jacket -- flat, the cuff stuffed into the pocket. He had no arm. 'So,' said the Ragman.

'Give me your jacket, and I'll give you mine.' So much quiet authority in his voice!

The one-armed man took off his jacket. So did the Ragman -- and I trembled at what I saw: for the Ragman's arm stayed in its sleeve, and when the other put it on, he had two good arms, thick as tree limbs; but the Ragman had only one.

'Go to work,' he said.

After that he found a drunk, lying unconscious beneath an army blanket, an old man, hunched, wizened, and sick. He took that blanket and wrapped it round himself, but for the drunk he left new clothes.

And now I had to run to keep up with the Ragman. Though he was weeping uncontrollably, and bleeding freely at the forehead, pulling his cart with one arm, stumbling for drunkenness, falling again and again, exhausted, old, old, and sick, yet he went with terrible speed. On spider's legs he skittered through the alleys of the City, this mile and the next, until he came to its limits, and then he rushed beyond.

I wept to see the change in this man. I hurt to see his sorrow. And yet I need to see where he was going in such haste, perhaps to know what drove him so.

The little old Ragman -- he came to a landfill. He came to the garbage pits. And I wanted to help him in what he did but I hung back, hiding. He climbed a hill. With tormented labour he cleared a little space on that hill. Then he signed. He lay down. He pillowed his head on a handkerchief and a jacket. He covered his bones with an army blanket. And he died.

Oh how I cried to witness that death! I slumped in a junked car and wailed and mourned as one who has no hope -- because I had come to love the Ragman. Every other face had faded in the wonder of this man, and I cherished him; but he died. I sobbed myself to sleep.

I did not know -- how could I know? -- that I slept through Friday night and Saturday and its night too.

But then, on Sunday morning, I was wakened by a violence.

Light -- pure, hard, demanding light -- slammed against my sour face, and I blinked, and I looked, and I saw the first wonder of all. There was the Ragman, folding the blanket most carefully, a scar on his forehead, but alive! And, besides that, healthy! There was no sign of sorrow or age, and all the rags that he had gathered shined for cleanliness.

Well, then I lowered my head and, trembling for all that I had seen, I myself walked up to the Ragman. I told him my name with shame, for I was a sorry figure next to him. Then I took off all my clothes in that place, and I said to him with dear yearning in my voice: 'Dress me.'

He dressed me. My Lord, he put new rags on me, and I am a wonder beside him. The Ragman, the Ragman, the Christ!