

Humans often centre their ego on the idea of power.

People are great when they are powerful, commanding wealth far beyond their needs. Countries are great when they are powerful, economically and with the ability to commit violence at a distance.

God is great, and because we worship God, God must be powerful like us.

We call God; king of all kings. We call God all-powerful. We call God almighty.

But, God is constantly telling us about a different way of experiencing the world. And then we constantly reshape this message back into a message that we understand.

God turns up as a peasant, we call him King. God dies in the equivalent of an electric chair and we wear it as jewellery. God comes back to life, walking through walls and mostly unrecognisable, and we claim perfect body restoration. God asks us to follow him and instead we believe in him.

But every now again, the spirit breaks through our fixation on power and a view of the world through frosted glass to shake us into understanding.

One of the ways we do this is by lighting candles.

I have three candles.

Let me light this candle.

This one represents the community we live in. We think it is powerful, resilient, rich and capable of sharing and then a tiny virus turns up and we rush to the shops to buy toilet paper. We fall from community and scared individuals that we will have nothing to wipe our bums with.

Let me light this candle.

This one represents us. We think we are powerful, resilient, rich and capable of sharing and then a tiny virus turns up and we get scared, we get busy with survival and stop sleeping. We are afraid of death.

Let me light this candle.

The last one represents God. You see, God is not all-powerful. God is not almighty. God is not a King. God is a tiny idea, hidden deep in our universe. God can be removed as easily as blowing out a candle.

Three candles. Three tiny signs.

Why would we light a candle? What possible help could a weak, tiny light be, easily overwhelmed by darkness.

Because from a candle, God emanates. God is hope and love, not power. God is resilience, not a temporary facade. God is doubt, not certainty. God is faith, not fact.

Because from a candle, I emanate. I am a tiny speck inside the whole universe, and yet the way I behave, the way I talk, the way I imagine the world can make a difference. I will work to reduce the impact on the environment and climate. I will get rid of plastic from my shopping. I will take time to hope, not being caught up in activity.

Because from a candle, our community emanates. We are held together, not by laws and jackboots of authority, but by trust in each other, a recognition of our shared humanity and a frankly, an understanding that we are all in this together.

Maybe after this pandemic leaves us, we will understand the world, not through power, force and violence, but through love, peace and grace.

Maybe, I am a dreamer, but I will carry a candle to remind me of the hope I carry with me.